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THE WEEKLY MONITOR;

A

SERIES OF ESSAYS

ON

MORAL AND RELIGIOUS SUBJECTS.

BY A LAYMAN.

PUBLISHED

BY BRANNAN & MORFORD, PHILADELPHIA, AND E. MORFORD, WILLINGTON, & CO. CHARLESTON, SOUTHCAROLINA.

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DISTRICT OF SOUTHCAROLINA, to wit.

Be it remembered that on the twentieth day of March, Anno Domini, one thousand eight hundred and ten, and in the thirty-fourth year of the Independence of the United States of America; E. Morford, Willington & Co. have deposited in this office the title of a book the right whereof they claim as proprietors in the words following, to wit.

"THE WEEKLY MONITOR; A SERIES OF ESSAYS ON MORAL AND RELIGIOUS SUBJECTS. BY A LAYMAN."

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JAMES JERVEY,
Clerk of the district of Southcarolina.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The Monitor was originally published, in weekly numbers, in the *Charleston Courier*. From the importance of the subjects which these papers dicuss, and the ability with which they are written, they excited the most lively interest among christians of every denomination; who considered them as a powerful appeal to reason and to the feelings in behalf of religion and virtue, and cherished the hope that much good would be derived from them. Impressed with these feelings they found, with sincere regret, that the avocations of the Author compelled him to relinquish the continuance of a publication so delightful and so useful. But, that a work so meritorious in its object and so excellent in its execution, should not be forgotten in the fleeting columns of a newspaper, the publishers were urgently called upon by their friends to reprint it in a more permanent form. The Author having revised it, and added a good deal of original matter to those numbers which he deemed to be incomplete, the Weekly Monitor is now presented to the public, under the persuasion that it will be a valuable addition to the library of every Christian.

TO THE AUTHOR

OF

THE WEEKLY MONITOR.

Amidst the riot of a busy world,
Where Vice her gaudy banner has unfurled,
Where her soft vows the heart of youth engage,
And bow the head of unrepenting age;
At Virtue's post a guardian firm to stand,
And brave the storm, that desolates the land;
What nobler end the active mind requires!
What nobler theme the ardent soul inspires!

In the sad records of destroying Time,
The silent monument of Truth sublime,
How weak and vain appears the warrior's arm,
To save his country from impending harm.
A stronger force than war's dread art supplies,
Must shield a nation's honour, or it dies!
Myriads of oaks the puny insect slays,
For one that falls beneath the lightning's blaze!

Long ere on Rome the Gothic standard wav'd,
Her walls were shaken, and her turrets brav'd,
Vice was the savage pow'r, whose ruthless hate
O'erturned the pillars of the Roman state.

Him Persius fought with Virtue's holy rage,
And lanched his thunders on the guilty age.
The monster felt, and as his glooms he shed,
He spared the laurel on the poet's head!

Though milder accents wake the vicious here,
Than those which thundered on the Roman ear,
And thou wouldst gently lead from Vice's sway,
Where Persius killed with his consuming ray,
Virtue in these an equal friend discerns,
Thy manly page with equal ardour burns;
While the bright sun, that shone not on the bard,
Religion, hails thee with her bright reward.

Thine is the care to save the sinful soul,
And hold the passions in their just control.
The careless lead with mild unconscious art,
The mind enlighten, and improve the heart;
Bid moral Truth with sacred Learning join
And aid the preacher in his task divine!
O may success attend thy noble aim,
And grateful honours deck thy modest name!

W.

TO THE AUTHOR

OF

THE WEEKLY MONITOR.

He, who, with Virtue's heavenly charms imprest,
Her flame unsullied glowing in his breast,
Dares, with intrepid confidence, to scan,
And speak her counsels to mistaken man;
Too much devoted to her sacred cause,
To quail at censure, or to court applause,
Presents an object to the realms above,
That angels honour, and the sainted love.

While Infidelity lays waste the land
With deadly hate, and sacrilegious hand,
And vainly labours, with incessant toil,
The records of eternal Truth to foil,
Demoralizing maxims to maintain,
To crush the priest, the altar, and the fane,
Annihilate the soul, and, at her nod,
Unpeople Heav'n, and disenthrone a God:

While Genius has debased the sacred lyre,
To fill the bosom with unhallow'd fire,
And Learning, Taste, and Eloquence combin'd,
To taint the fancy, and corrupt the mind,
Yours is the glorious aim, the soul to raise
Above the guilt of these degenerate days.
To rouse the careless, animate the meek,
Restrain the daring, and support the weak;

To check the infidel's aspiring pride,
The penitent in Wisdom's paths to guide;
A balm to suffering Virtue to impart;
To calm the passions, and improve the heart;
To weigh the worth of sublunary joy,
On nobler happiness the thoughts employ,
And rising, on the wings of Faith sublime,
To look beyond the narrow bounds of Time.

How grand the picture, in your spotless page,
Of him, who quelled the insulting heathen's rage,
How died, from endless Death the world to save,
And rose again triumphant o'er the grave;
Bright rays of glory round his temples shine,
His looks beam majesty, and love divine;
His arm is stretched to yield almighty aid,
His voice is raised to waken, and persuade;

In every look, in every act we trace
The friend, the Saviour of the human race.
Here inexperienced youth may early learn,
The paths of Truth and Virtue to discern;
The virgin, here, may admonitions find,
To teach, exalt, and purify the mind;
The married pair, with fond affection prove,
The holy cement of connubial love;

The charm that bids contending passions cease,
And guards the altar of domestic peace:
Here Heaven's unsullied principles convey
Instruction to the serious and the gay,
Inspire the hoary sage, and beardless youth,
With ardent virtue and unshaken truth,
Compel the skeptic conscious dread to feel,
And force the daring infidel to kneel.

Let Wit and Learning gratefully entwine
Around their votary's brows a wreath divine;
Let Science, eagle-eyed, profusely shed
Her sacred lustre on her favourite's head,
And, let the Muse, with deathless fame, reward
The generous labours of the mighty bard;
'Tis yours, my friend, to know a nobler joy,
Which Time can ne'er diminish, nor destroy.

Religion views the honours you have won,
With partial eye, and hails her favour'd son;
With soul inspiring voice, she bade you stand,
The sword of Truth refulgent in your hand;
With pious zeal, and dauntless faith, maintain
Her awful cause, and ultimately gain,
With heaven's high standard o'er your head unfurl'd,
The meed of virtue in a better world.

M. K.

DEDICATION.

To every one who bears the name of Christ, and is careful not to dishonour the name which he bears: to the candid deist, who is honest in his doubts, and sincere in his inquiries after truth; to him, who has proved the instability of worldly gratifications, and is anxious to rest his hopes on some better foundation; to all, who are neither so blind as not to perceive the weakness and dependence of man, nor so unwise as to decline the support and protection of God;—the Monitor affectionately dedicates the following essays.

He is not vain enough to imagine, that these pages contain a single precept, which has not been a thousand times inculcated, or a single position, which has not been a thousand times proved; but he knows that mankind err more through forgetfulness, than ignorance of their duty; and, in times like the present he believes, that the awful obligations of religion cannot be too frequently enforced.

He, who shall take up this volume, in the hope of cherishing the peculiar prejudices of a sect, of

triumphing over the errors of an opponent, or of gratifying his taste for disputation, will be disappointed. The writer is not conscious of desiring any triumph, but that of truth; of defending any cause but that of christianity; but, leaving the barren field of controversy and idle speculation to others, he has laboured to diffuse those eternal principles, which have received the concurring sanction of reason and revelation. His aim has been, not to perplex, but to illustrate; not to dazzle, but to warm; not to be admired but to be understood; not to irritate the passions, but to sooth and regulate them; not to play round the imagination, but to purify and mend the heart.

But he is sensible that his offering is full of imperfections, and comes far short of what he could have wished to present to the public. He feels that he will stand in need of, and hopes to receive their indulgence, while he trusts, that the motives of the work will partly compensate the deficiencies of its execution. The good of his readers has been his main object, and their improvement in virtue will be his best reward.

Charleston, March, 1810.

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THE WEEKLY MONITOR.

NO. I.

INTRODUCTION.

THERE is, in the heart of every man, a sentiment of religion, which no sophistry can entirely pervert, no power can wholly destroy. This vigorous principle, which elevates the soul to the contemplation of its great Creator, the pleasures of sense, our follies, and our vices, may weaken, but cannot annihilate. This sacred spark, which enkindles the flame of piety, the cares of this world may smother, but cannot extinguish. Heaven-born, and emanating from the fountain of light, it disdains every inferior alliance, and, in spite of every effort to degrade it, aspires continually towards its native region, and proves itself to be divine.

For the truth of this, we might appeal with confidence to the page of history, to the confession of every nation and tongue, and rest our cause on the united suffrages of all mankind. But there is no need of argument in proof of that, which every man's conscience acknowledges to be true. In vain does the sceptic deny the existence of those feelings, which the hand of Heaven has implanted in every breast. Like the fool, who says in his heart "there is no God," "he knows that he is vainly labouring to believe a lie;" and at one period or other of his life, in the season of calm reflection, under the pressure of some afflicting bereavement, in the hour of sickness, or on the bed of death, there is no human being, who does not feel within himself an irresistible impulse to adore the wisdom, to propitiate the favour, and to confide in the goodness of an invisible, Almighty power.

Since it is, therefore, impossible to eradicate from the heart a sense of our dependance on the Supreme Being, surely, of all subjects, that which professes to reveal his divine will, and to point out the path which leads to him, is of the first (I had almost said exclusive) importance; calculated, above all others, to enlarge the capacities, and worthy of the greatest exertions of the mind of man. For, as surely as there is a Creator, who originally formed all things by

his power, and who is the Almighty preserver, and moral governor of the rational creatures whom he has made, so surely does the welfare of the intelligent part of his creation depend, solely, on the favour and protection of this great Father of all. Every thing, which tends to elevate our thoughts to him, must conduce to our happiness; and there is no moral evil, which does not originate in our ignorance, our erroneous conceptions, or our forgetfulness of this great Being.

The truth of these observations has, indeed, been rarely, or never denied: And now, the path which would conduct us to happiness, being plain and open before us, it seems almost impossible that the most careless traveller should ever miss his way. But, alas! how often do these golden expectations terminate in disappointment and vain regret! Few of these blossoms of hope withstand the rude tempest, or the killing frost. The good seed, which promised an abundant increase, either falls by the way side, and is lost; or it takes no root, and withers away; or it is choked by the cares and pleasures of the world. Our duty is, indeed, most plain; but our passions blind our understandings, and corrupt our hearts. Stewards of a righteous master, we waste his goods, and forget that the day of reckoning is at hand. Pensioners of his bounty, we neglect the giver of all that

we possess, and erect our heads with all the pride of rightful inheritors of the earth. Ignorant of what a day may bring forth, we lay our plans as if we were lords of futurity; and confessing our entire dependance on God, we act as if all things were at our command.

But, while thousands are thus passing through this probationary stage of existence, with scarce a thought of the day of final retribution, anxious only to seize the fleeting gratifications of the present moment, and careless whether the interests of religion flourish or decay; while others, assuming the sacred name of christians, exhibit in the whole tenor of their lives a lamentable ignorance of the spirit of the gospel, possessing the form of godliness, but strangers to its power, and resting at the threshold of the temple, without ever approaching the altar of God: there is another description of persons, still more reprehensible, and of a character more decidedly hostile; who, not content with their own ruin, seem ambitious to accomplish the destruction of all that is great and good around them. These are the arrogant disputers of this world, whose inverted glory it is, to involve in doubt and obscurity the plainest lessons of experience, and to entangle, in the mazes of error, the noble simplicity of truth. These are the scoffers,

of whom the prophetic apostle forewarned the church; who turning Satire from her proper objects, Vice and Folly, direct her keenest shafts at the buckler of Faith; and strive, by ridicule, to throw contempt on the most awful subjects and most sacred mysteries. Blind leaders of the blind, who, promising liberty to others, are themselves the slaves of passion; rejecting that revelation, whose touch would paralize their impurity and confound their pride; exalting, in their vain imaginations, that Reason, of which they are at once the idolators and the shame, and affecting to celebrate the wonders of Nature, while they deny the authority, and sometimes the existence, of Nature's God.

Dark as this picture is, it cannot be denied that it is a too faithful representation of the conduct of a large portion of society; and it seems to be difficult for any one, who is at all concerned for the honour and happiness of human nature, to contemplate it with indifference. But to him, who is firmly convinced of the truth of christianity, whose understanding has deliberately weighed its evidences, and whose will yields, as far as human imperfection permits, an unreserved obedience to its laws, it affords matter for the most painful reflection. It is impossible for such a man to witness, without the deepest concern, the fatal infatuation of so many of his fellow beings, who

are thus wasting life away, as if the Almighty had never spoken, in accents of mercy, to his creatures; as if the religion of his son had never been revealed to mankind. That gospel, which is the foundation of his own hopes teaches him to labour to animate the hopes of others. That faith, which is the source of his own happiness, it is his pride and pleasure to communicate to all; and, excepting the infirmities which he feels clinging to his nature, that every member of the human family may be, not *almost*, but *altogether* such as he is, is his unwearied endeavour and most fervent prayer.

Impressed with these considerations, convinced of the incalculable importance of religion to the welfare of society, and aware of some of the causes which prevent its reception, and retard its progress in the heart, I have often reflected in what manner I could best perform my share of the general task, and aid, by all the means in my power, the common cause of truth and christianity. I did not hesitate long. My mind naturally turned to the subject, on which it had been long accustomed, and still most loves to dwell. I had observed with what avidity our daily papers are read, and I was inclined to hope, that an occasional essay, devoted to religion, might not be altogether unacceptable to the public. I thought it possible, that

some might be tempted to read it by the novelty of its appearance; that some might bestow a few minutes on its perusal, who have not patience or will not condescend, to attend to the delivery of a sermon; and that others who shrink from the sight of a volume, might yet be induced to investigate even a serious topic, when exhibited in the attractive columns of a newspaper.

I have often remarked with what difficulty men of liberal education are brought to an entire submission to the authority of the gospel. I know that, in many minds, the terms religion and dulness are considered as almost synonymous; and I confess that I feel an anxiety to overcome a prejudice, which greatly hinders the extension of truth, and to vindicate the most awful doctrines from a reproach, which has been so undeservedly fastened upon them. Nor do I despair of some degree of success in this part of my design. The attacks of infidelity have, in all ages, drawn forth many an able champion in the cause of religion; and, of late years especially, in proportion as her enemies have multiplied, her intrepid defenders have poured into the field. In the pious labours of these venerable benefactors of mankind, I have met with many passages, which the most elegant writer need not be ashamed to own. Of the divines and moralists, who

have written in our own language, there are some, who certainly are neither deficient in profound learning, nor splendid genius, nor the most animating eloquence: and, knowing that those who have most studied them, admire them the most, I cannot doubt that occasional selections from their writings will be productive of some good. The humble christian will rejoice to see genuine piety arrayed in such beautiful colours. The scholar and the man of cultivated taste, will pay an involuntary tribute to the powers of a rich fancy, and the charms of a polished style; and those, who have been accustomed proudly to rank the chiefs of literature at the head of the forces of infidelity, may be compelled to confess, that all genius, and taste, and talents, and learning, have not enlisted themselves among the enemies of the christian faith.

The neglect of the scriptures is another impediment to the progress of religion, which it is the duty of every christian to labour to remove. The pride of intellectual superiority, a disdain of the prejudices of the vulgar, indolence, levity, and, above all, the pernicious writings of the enemies of revelation, have conspired to produce this unhappy effect. But, from whatever cause it has arisen, it must be confessed that the sacred volume is by many persons either entirely forgotten, or faintly remembered, like some superstition

of the nursery, fitted to catch the attention of a child, but unworthy the employment of maturer years. Yet those records, which the proud philosopher affects to despise, have undergone the patient investigation, and received the concurring sanction, of some of the most illustrious characters that ever appeared among mankind. Should I, therefore, be so happy as to succeed in exciting in my readers a taste for works of a religious nature, I might then venture to invite them to the pure fountain of truth. And, such is the intrinsic excellence of the scriptures, that I should not fear the result. The historical compositions of Moses abound with so many instances of true simplicity and pathos; the writings of David and the Prophets are conceived in strains of piety so animating, of sublimity so grand and awful; and, such is the divine purity, which runs through every page of the Gospel, that no one, I am persuaded, can rise from the serious perusal of them, without feeling himself both delighted and improved.

And oh! if this solid foundation were but laid, what ease, what pleasure would it be, to accomplish the great object of all religion, and erect the fair superstructure of a virtuous life! The obligations which christianity imposes on its followers are incalculably stronger than all that Reason, under the most favourable circumstances, ever taught; and to him, who receives the

scriptures as the word of God, every moral precept comes clothed with an authority which philosophy has never dared to assume. Could my readers, therefore, be induced to examine the inspired writings with candour and sincerity, earnest in the search of truth, and resolved, when once in possession of this "pearl of great price," to part with it no more, I should look forward, with increased confidence, to that more advanced state of virtue, when faith should manifest its life and efficacy by active goodness, and the light of holiness shine more and more unto the perfect day. It is in the first stage of the christian's journey, that his resolution and vigilance are most required. Every step towards Heaven invigorates his hopes, and diminishes the attractions of the receding world. It is in the onset of the battle, that the christian soldier has most to fear. Every victory, every temptation increases his courage and his confidence, while the passions grow weaker by every fresh repulse.

Such are the motives which have determined me to invite the attention of the public to a series of essays on moral and religious subjects; nor will I attempt to conceal the solicitude, with which I commence my undertaking. To offer to the child of affliction the sweet consolations of religion; to arrest the thoughtless in his swift progress to destruction; to revive the dying

flame of piety; to shake the deep-rooted confidence of the infidel; to settle the faith of the doubting christian; to warm the cold, and to animate the timid, by the hope of the promised reward; these are, indeed, aims of no ordinary boldness; and when I compare my slender resources with the great objects before me, my heart sinks within me, and I am ready to retire, in despondency, from this field of difficulty and of danger:

> "But all is in His hands, whose praise I seek;
> "His frown can disappoint the proudest strain;
> "His approbation prosper even *mine*."

THE WEEKLY MONITOR.

NO. II.

ON THE PLEASURE AND ADVANTAGE ARISING FROM THE PERFORMANCE OF THE DUTIES OF DEVOTION.

Of the great and awful truths, which God has been pleased to reveal to his creatures, there is not one which accounts more satisfactorily for the actual condition of the world, or is more abundantly confirmed by universal experience, than the fall of man. Our corrupt passions, every wayward inclination of the heart, all that we think, or say, or do, bear witness to the certainty of this mournful fact; and, in spite of the sneers and sophisms of infidelity, we carry in our own bosoms a sad conviction, that man is, indeed, a fallen being, warped from the original rectitude of his nature, and stripped of that robe of innocence, which formed his brightest ornament, when he issued, fair and spotless, from the hands of his Creator.

One consequence of the transgression of our first parents, which produces a great portion of our misery, and can never be sufficiently deplored, is, an undue attachment to the objects of sense, and a deep-rooted aversion to the contemplation of spiritual things. This of itself, ought to convince the most determined sceptic, that, "the gold is become dim and the most fine gold changed." Destined for immortality, we confine our attention to the passing follies of an hour; bound by the tyranny of despotic passions, we make no effort to regain our liberty; and, like our wretched progenitor, having contemned the authority, we tremble at the voice, and shrink from the presence of God.

To counteract this fatal propensity; to invite us to that intercourse with the Almighty, which would finally transform us into his own image; to encourage us to draw near unto him, who never said to the sincere and contrite "Seek ye my face, in vain;" to save us from the contagion of vice and folly; to wean us from the corrupting pleasures of sense, and to fix our affections on heavenly things, is the gracious design of the Gospel, and the great business of Religion.

The inspired writers are, therefore, full and explicit on this subject, and recommend, by all the powers of

argument and persuasion, that communion with our Maker, which can alone make us happy here, and prepare us for those more refined enjoyments which are promised to the virtuous in a future state of existence. And in this, as in every other instance, the scriptures speak the language of Truth and Reason; and "Wisdom is justified of all her children." While Idolatry and Superstition bring their vain oblations to their unknown god, Christianity reveals the true object of adoration, and leads us to the infinite Spirit, who requires to be worshipped in spirit and in truth. While Philosophy descants on the dignity of human nature, Christianity exposes her fallen state, and points to the only means of restoration; and while the metaphysician entangles himself in the webs of his own creation, and the moralist displays his meagre system of ethics, she alone probes to the bottom of the wound, and begins the great work of amendment at the heart.

What then shall we say of that modern and sacrilegious attempt, which would separate Morality from Devotion, its natural ally, its best, its only support. And how irrational and inconsistent is their conduct, who boast of the discharge of every duty, but that which they owe to their Maker, and while they affect to do justly, and to love mercy, are too proud to walk humbly with their God? Devotion is, in truth, the very

foundation of all morality. It is the highest honour and happiness of which our nature is capable. It connects us beforehand with the world of spirits, and initiates us, even while on earth, to the society of saints and angels, and to an intercourse with God himself. It forms our minds to the relish of all that is truly great and beautiful. It is the vigorous root, which produces the fruits of goodness; the pure fountain, from which flow all those streams of comfort, that decorate our prospect, and refresh our weariness, in the journey of life.

" My son, give me thy heart," is the affectionate command of the Deity: And to whom indeed should the heart be given, but to him who made it, who holds in his hand its eternal destiny; who is no stranger to its nature, its wants, or its weaknesses; and who knows how vainly it seeks for happiness in every other object? It is impossible to conceive an employment more rational or becoming, than that of the devout mind, in its silent and reverential approach to its Creator. One act of secret homage, one tear of unfeigned contrition, one sigh of holy desire, arising from true devotion of heart, is more acceptable to the Almighty than the most pompous and costly sacrifice, and will plead more forcibly in our favour, than " the cattle of a thousand hills, or ten thousand rivers of oil."

Devotion is an exercise of the best affections of the soul. We are formed to admire and to imitate whatever is grand and excellent. And how can our admiration be raised, or our imitation be more effectually secured, than by the contemplation of that Being who is himself the source of all perfection. Every honest heart rejoices in an opportunity of testifying its gratitude to a generous benefactor. And what can better excite this delightful sensation, than the habit of the devout mind, in pouring out its thanks to the giver of every good and perfect gift?

On every situation of life devotion exerts its salutary influence. If we are harassed by the perplexing cares, and exhausted by the fatigues of business, devotion presents a scene of holy tranquillity, and invites us "to acquaint ourselves with God, and be at peace." When the waves of temptation arise, and our hearts are ready to die within us, Devotion is a sure refuge from the storm, and hope revives at the voice of the Saviour, calling to us "It is I; be not afraid." In prosperity, Devotion heightens all our comforts, assures us of the continued protection of Heaven, and crowns every other enjoyment with the blessing of a cheerful heart. In adversity, it opens to us a a source of consolation and support, which the world can neither give nor take away. And at all times, and in all places,

enables us to say with the psalmist. "It is good for us to draw near unto God."

Such are the blessings which reward the devout exercises of the pious Christian; and thus does our holy religion show forth its unrivalled excellence, connecting obedience with happiness, and enforcing no precept, which it is not equally our duty and our interest to perform. Let us, therefore, give ourselves up to the direction of our heavenly Master, and "present to him the living sacrifice of our souls and bodies, which is our reasonable service."

To engage the affections of my readers on this important subject, and to show that the duties of devotion are neither irksome nor insipid, I shall conclude this essay with the following animated extract. It is taken from a delightful little volume of *Letters to a young Lady* by the Rev. Mr. Bennet; a work, in my opinion, of uncommon merit, abounding with just and noble sentiments, and clothing the most serious truths in all the charms of genius and taste.

"Devotion, considered simply in itself, is an intercourse betwixt us and God, betwixt the supreme, self-existent, inconceivable spirit, which formed and preserves the universe, and that particular spirit, with which, for awful reasons, he has animated a portion of *matter* upon earth, that we call man. It is a silent

act, in which the soul devests itself of outward things, flies into Heaven, and pours forth all its wants, wishes, hopes, fears, guilt, or pleasures, into the bosom of an *Almighty* friend.

"Though this devotion, in its first stages, may be a wearisome or insipid exercise, yet this arises merely from the depravity of our nature, and of our passions. A little habit will overcome this reluctance. When you have fairly entered on your journey "the ways of this wisdom will be ways of pleasantness, and all its paths, peace."

"True devotion, doubtless, requires a considerable degree of *abstraction* from the world. Hence *modern* Christians treat it as a vision. Hence many modern writers have little of its unction. But it glows in the Scriptures. It warms us in the Fathers. It burned in an Austin, and in many other of those persecuted martyrs, who are now with God. That we *hear* little of this true devotion, is not wonderful. It makes no noise in the circles of the learned, or of the elegant. Under an heap of worldly cares, we *smother* the lovely infant, and will not let it breathe. Vanity, Ambition, Pleasure, Avarice, quench the celestial fire. And these, alas! are too much the god of mortals. Ever since the world began, writers have been amusing us only with *shadows* of this piety, instead of giving its

soul and *substance*. Superstition has placed it in opinions, ceremonies, austerities, pilgrimages, persecution, an august temple or splendid imagery, which had little connection with sentiment or spirit. Enthusiasm has swelled with unnatural conceptions, and obtruded a spurious offspring on the world, instead of this engaging child of Reason and Truth; whilst the luke-warm have rested in a few outward duties, which have had no vigour, and, as they sprung not from the heart, never entered the temple of the MOST HIGH.

"Real piety is of a very different, and a much more *animated* nature. It looks up to God, sees, hears, feels him, in every event, in every vicissitude, in all places, in all seasons, and upon all occasions. It is theory, vivified by experience. It is faith, *substantiated* by *mental* enjoyment. It is heaven transplanted into the human bosom. It is the radiance of the Divinity, warming and incircling man. It is *spiritual* sense, gratified by *spiritual* sensations. Without this all ceremonies are inefficacious. Books, prayers, sacraments, and meditations, are but a body without a soul, a statue without animation.

"That man is capable of such an intercourse with his Maker, there are many living witnesses to prove. Without having recourse to the visions of fanatics,

or the dreams of enthusiasts, it may be proved to spring from natural and philosophical causes. God is a spirit; so is the mind. Bodies can have intercourse; so can souls. When minds are in an *assimilating* state of purity, they have union with their maker. This was the bliss of Paradise. Sin interrupted, and holiness must restore it. To a soul, thus disposed, the Creator communicates himself, in a manner, which is as insensible to the natural eye as the falling of dew, but not less refreshing to its secret powers, than *that* is to vegetation.

"The primitive saints are describing this, when they speak of their transports. David felt it when he longed for God, "as the hart panteth after the water brooks." St. Paul knew it when he gloried in his tribulations. It was *embodied* in him, when he was "carried up into the third heavens, and heard things impossible to be uttered." St. Stephen was filled with it, when he "saw the heavens open," and prayed for his murderers. By it, martyrs were supported, when they were stoned and sawed asunder. And until we feel it in *ourselves*, we shall never fully know how gracious the Lord is.

"If you can acquire this spiritual abstraction, you will at once have made your fortune for eternity. It will be of little moment, what is your lot on earth, or

what the distinguishing vicissitudes of your life. Prosperity, or adversity, health or sickness, honour or disgrace, a cottage or a crown, will all be so many instruments of glory. The whole creation will become a temple. Every event and every object will lead your mind to God; and in his greatness and perfection, you will insensibly lose the littleness, the glare and tinsel, of all human things.

"If I wished only to set off your *person* to the greatest advantage, I would recommend this true sublime of religion. It gives a pleasing serenity to the countenance, and a cheerfulness to the spirits, beyond the reach of art, or the power of affectation.—It communicates a real transport to the mind; which dissipation mimics only for a moment; a sweetness to the disposition, and a lustre to the manners, which all the airs of modern politeness study, but in vain. Easy in yourself, it will make you in perfect good humour with the world; and when you are diffusing happiness around you, you will only be dealing out the broken fragments, that remain after you have eaten."

THE WEEKLY MONITOR.

NO. III.

ON THE DUTY OF CARRYING THE SPIRIT OF DEVOTION INTO THE COMMON OCCURRENCES OF LIFE.

With a sincere desire to improve the minds, and to promote the happiness of my fellow citizens, it is my endeavour to gain their attention by occasional selections from some favourite authors, whose writings appear to be well calculated to promote the end I have in view. The extract on devotion, which concluded the preceding number, could not fail, I think, to charm most of my readers. To-day, I invite them to the perusal of a work of a different character: and I am willing to hope, that uncommon strength of argument, perspicuous elucidation, and close reasoning, affording conclusions the most satisfactory, and drawn from premises unquestionably true, will in some minds, produce a serious and last-

ing effect. Mine indeed is an humble office. The ample field of moral and religious literature is before me; and a thousand flowers, planted by the hand of Genius and Piety, are diffusing their sweets on every side. It is my pleasing task to collect their scattered fragrance, and so to arrange their varied beauties, as to render them not unworthy of public acceptance; happy if I can excite the good affections of my readers, and by detaching them, if possible, from the unsatisfactory topics of the day, awaken them to reflect on the infinite importance of the awful truths of religion.

* Devotion is neither *private* nor *public* prayers; but prayers, whether private or public, are particular parts or instances of devotion. Devotion signifies a life given or *devoted* to God.

He, therefore, is the devout man, who lives no longer to his own will, or the way and spirit of the world, but to the sole will of God; who considers God in every thing, who serves God in every thing, who makes all the parts of his *common* life, parts

* For this selection I am indebted to *Law's Serious Call*, a work which stands high in the estimation of christians of every denomination, and of which it is no mean praise to say that Dr. Johnson acknowledged, that it was the first, which aroused him to the consideration of religious truths.

of piety doing every thing in the name of God, and under such rules as are conformable to his glory.

We readily acknowledge, that God alone is to be the rule and measure of our prayers, that in them we are to look wholy unto him, and act wholy for him; that we are only to pray in such a manner, for such things, and such ends, as are suitable to his glory.—Now, let any one but find out the reason why he is to be thus strictly pious in his prayers, and he will find the same as strong a reason to be as strictly pious in all the other parts of his life. For the only reason why our prayers should have nothing in them but what is wise, and holy, and heavenly, is, that our lives may be of the same nature, full of the same wisdom, holiness, and heavenly tempers, that we may *live* unto God in the same spirit that we *pray* unto him. Were it not our strict duty to live by reason, to devote *all* the actions of our lives unto God, were it not absolutely necessary to walk before him in wisdom and holiness, doing every thing in his name, and for his glory, there would be no excellency or wisdom in the most heavenly prayers.—Nay, such prayers would be absurdities; they would be like prayers for *wings*, when it was no part of our duty to *fly*.

As sure, therefore, as there is any wisdom in praying for the spirit of God, so sure is it, that we are to make that spirit the rule of *all* our actions. As sure as it is our duty to look wholly unto God in our prayers, so sure is it, that it is our duty to live wholly unto God in our lives. So that unreasonable and absurd ways of life, whether in labour or diversion, whether they consume our time, or our money, are like unreasonable and absurd prayers, and are as truly an offence unto God.

It is for want of knowing, or at least considering this, that we see such a mixture of ridicule in the lives of some people. You see them strict as to some times and places of devotion; but when the service of the church is over, they are like those that seldom or never come there. In their way of life, their manner of spending their time and money, in their cares and fears, their pleasures and indulgences, in their labour and diversions, they are like the rest of the world. It is this which makes the loose part of the world point their ridicule against those that are devout; because they see their devotion goes no farther than their prayers; that they live by the same humour of fancy, and in as full an enjoyment of all the follies of life, as other people. This is the reason why they are the jest and scorn of the irreligious; not because

they are really devoted to God, but because they appear to have no other devotion but that of occasional prayers.

And, indeed, there cannot any thing be imagined more absurd in itself, than wise and sublime and heavenly prayers, added to a life of vanity and folly. For to be weak and foolish in spending our time and money, is as great a mistake as to be weak and foolish in relation to our prayers. And to allow ourselves in any ways of life, that neither are nor can be offered to God, is the same irreligion as to neglect our prayers, or to use them in such a manner, as to make them an offering unworthy of him. The short of the matter is this: Either reason and religion prescribe rules and ends to *all* the ordinary actions of our life, or they do not. If they do, then it is as necessary to govern *all* our actions by those rules, as it is necessary to worship God. This is the *common devotion* which our blessed Saviour taught in order to make it the *common life* of all christians. Is it not therefore exceedingly strange, that persons who profess to believe the truths of christianity, should neglect these common duties of our ordinary life, which are commanded in every page of the gospel?

If the doctrines of christianity were practised, they would make a man as different from other peo-

ple as to all worldly tempers, sensual pleasures, and the pride of life, as wisdom is different from folly; and it would be as easy to know a christian by his outward course of life, as it is now difficult to find any body that lives it. For it is notorious, that christians are now not only like other men in their frailties and infirmities (this might be in some degree excusable) but the complaint is, that they are like heathens in all the main and chief articles of their lives. They enjoy the world, and live every day in the same tempers and the same designs, and the same indulgences, as they did who knew not God, nor had any hopes of happiness in another life. Every one that is capable of reflection, must have observed this to be the case.

But how different an effect did the goodness of God intend, for his creatures, by the wonderful scheme of redemption! How greatly different in their nature and tendency, are the doctrines and precepts of our blessed Saviour and his apostles! They call us to renounce the world, and differ in every temper and way of life, from the spirit and way of the world; to renounce all its goods, to fear none of its evils, to reject its joys, and have no value for its happiness; to live in spiritual watching, in holy fear, and heavenly aspiring after another life; to take up our daily cross,

to deny ourselves, to profess the blessedness of mourning; to seek the blessedness of a meek and quiet spirit; to forsake the pride and vanity of riches; to take no thought for the morrow; to live in the profoundest state of humility; to rejoice in worldly sufferings; to reject the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life; to bear injuries; to forgive and bless our enemies, and to love mankind as God loveth them; to give up our whole hearts and affections to God, and to strive to enter through the strait gate, into a life of eternal glory.

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NO. IV.

ON THE RESURRECTION.

When the persevering cruelty of the Jews had followed, through a long track of suffering, the steps of the innocent and uncomplaining Jesus; when Art and Malice having tempted his wretched disciple to betray him, had dragged their victim to the tribunal of Pilate; had calumniated, mocked and scourged him, and finally conducted him to a painful and ignominious death; when his enemies had thus quenched their thirst of blood, their triumph seemed to be complete; and the dejected followers of the Saviour gave themselves up to despair. For awhile indeed, "they trusted that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel;" but their trust now died within them, their high expectations vanished, and the glorious promises, and wonderful actions of their master, disappeared like a

vision of the night, or the memory of a tale that is told. The spear of the Roman soldier had given a death-blow to their courage. Christianity had apparently expired, with its suffering author, on the cross; and both friends and foes seemed to have buried their hopes and fears in his grave.

But " why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?" Restrain your impious triumph, ye rulers of Jerusalem ! " He that sitteth in the Heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have you in derision." And, weep no more, disconsolate followers of your crucified Master! He, who rescued Joseph from the pit, into which his envious brethren had cast him; who delivered Jonah from his living tomb, and Daniel from the den of lions; he hath indeed suffered the Redeemer to descend into the dark valley of the shadow of Death; but "he will not leave his soul in hell, nor suffer his holy one to see corruption." Call to mind the words of Hosea: "Come and let us return unto the Lord; for he hath torn and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up: after two days he will receive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight." Are the sublime strains of Isaiah no more to be remembered, when in the person of the future Saviour, he thus addressed the church? "Thy dead men shall live, together with

my dead body shall they arise: awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." But, more than all, have you so soon forgotten the promise of your Lord? "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will build it up." Pride and Sensuality had, indeed, blinded the understandings of your obstinate countrymen: but could not you perceive that he spake of the temple of his body? Oh fools, and slow of heart, to believe all that the prophets, and even your Redeemer himself, have spoken. Ought not Christ, then, to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory. It is the ordination of Providence. The path of humility conducts to honour; the fine gold must be tried in the fire; the toils of the conflict precede the rewards of victory; and the agonies of your Lord, his cross and passion, his death and burial, shall give place to the power and splendour of his resurrection.

I have been led to these reflections by the perusal of an admirable discourse of the late bishop Horne: and when I consider the importance of this subject, its awful dignity, and the interesting consequences which result from it, I know not how I can render a better service to my readers, than by pressing it on their most serious attention. The resurrection of our Lord from the dead is the foundation of our faith,

and the corner stone of the great fabric of his religion. It is the seal of his divinity, the irrefragable proof of the completion of the mighty work of redemption, and the strong assurance of our own resurrection at the last day. A fact so illustrious and momentous, destined to withstand all opposition, to overthrow the temples of Idolatry, and to effect the conversion of the world, the providence of the Almighty has not left without sufficient evidences of its truth. In the discourse to which I have already alluded, some of the arguments, which establish this fundamental article of the Christian's belief, are stated with equal elegance and perspicuity; and I therefore submit the following extracts to my readers, in the hope that some of them may be thereby induced to give the work itself an attentive perusal.

"Thus there was no capacity of mankind, no "time, no place, but had visible proof of the resurrec- "tion of Christ. He appeared to men and women; to "clergy and laity; to sinners of both sexes; to weak "men and to criminals; to doubters and deniers; at "home and abroad; in public and in private; in their "houses and on their journies; unexpected and by "appointment; betimes in the morning, and late at "night; to his disciples in conjunction, and to them in "dispersion; when they did look for him, and when

"they did not; he appeared upon earth to many, and to "St. Paul and St. Stephen, from Heaven. So that we "can require no greater testimony than all these are "able to give us, who saw for themselves, and for us "too, that the faith and certainty of the resurrection "of Jesus might be conveyed to all ages and genera- "tions.

"To enable the apostles to convey it, the Spirit "of Truth himself set his seal to this article of our "creed, by coming down upon the day of Pentecost, "and bestowing on them wisdom to teach, power to "confirm, and patience to suffer, for the doctrine of "the resurrection; until, converted by their preaching, "the nations of the earth bore universal testimony to "the reality thereof. For that a religion* which "taught men to be meek and humble, disposed to re- "ceive injuries, but not to do any; a religion, which

*This passage is extracted from bishop Taylor's *Moral Demonstration of the Truth of Christianity*, republished by an English divine: a work, on which bishop Horne has bestowed the following testimony of his approbation. "May it meet with the success it deserves! for no tract ever came from the pen of man better calculated to dispel those doubts and difficulties, which may arise in the mind of a believer; or to work conviction and conversion in that of the unbeliever, who can bring himself to give it a fair and attentive perusal. This has ever appeared to me to be its true character, since the hour when, with equal surprise and pleasure, I first met with it where it so long lay hidden from the fashionable world, in the *Ductor Dubitantium*."

"gave countenance to the poor and lowly, at a time
"when riches were adored, and ambition and pleasure
"had possessed the heart of all mankind; that such a
"religion, in such an age, by the sermons and conduct
"of fishermen, men of mean breeding and illiberal arts,
"should so speedily triumph over the philosophy of the
"world, and the arguments of the subtle, and the dis-
"courses of the eloquent, the power of princes and the
"interests of states, the inclinations of nature and the
"blindness of zeal, the force of custom and the solici-
"tation of passion, the pleasures of sin, and the busy
"arts of the great enemy of mankind; that is, against
"wit and power, superstition and wilfulness, fame and
"money, nature and empire, which are all the causes
"in this world that can make a thing impossible; this,
"this is to be ascribed to the power of God, and is the
"great demonstration of the resurrection of Jesus.
"Every thing was an argument for it, and improved it;
"no objection could hinder it, no enemies destroy it:
"whatsoever was for it made the religion to increase;
"whatsoever was against made it to increase. If the chris-
"tians had peace, they went abroad and brought in con-
"verts; if they had persecution, the converts came in
"to them. In prosperity they allured and enticed the
"world by the beauty of holiness; in affliction and trou-
"ble they amazed all men with the splendour of their

"innocence, and the glories of their patience. Quick-
"ly, therefore, it was, that the world became disciple
"to the glorious Nazarine, and men could no longer
"doubt of the resurrection of Jesus, when it became
"demonstrated by the certainty of those who saw it, and
"the courage of those who died for it, and the multi-
"tude of those who believed it, who by their sermons
"and their actions, by their public offices and dis-
"courses, by festivals and sacraments, by arguments
"of sense and experience, by reason and religion, by
"persuading rational men, and establishing believing
"christians, by their living in the obedience, and dying
"for the testimony of Jesus, have greatly advanced his
"kingdom, and his power, and his glory, into which he
"entered, upon his resurrection from the dead.

"If, therefore, (concludes bishop Horne,) the pa-
"triarchs, the law, and the prophets; if Heaven and
"earth; if angels from above, and the dead from be-
"neath; if the appearances of Christ himself on earth
"and from Heaven: if the Spirit of Truth, with all his
"gifts and graces; if the miracles of the apostles, the
"lives of the saints, the sufferings of confessors, and the
"death of martyrs: if the conversion of the world to the
"faith of a crucified Saviour, without power, wealth,
"or learning; if the church, with the antiquity, univer-
"sality, and consent of her institutions and services for

"above seventeen centuries, from the day on which "Christ was first seen by the eleven after his resurrec- "tion, to this hour; and lastly, if the objections of the "adversary, establishing the truth which they were in- "tended to subvert; that is to say, in one word, if all the "evidence which God can give, or man receive, be "sufficient to prove a matter of fact, then may we ever- "more rejoice, and evermore let us therefore rejoice, "in all the consequences of this glorious truth 'The "Lord is risen indeed.'"

THE WEEKLY MONITOR.

NO. V.

ON THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

Of all the interesting speculations, on which the human soul delights to dwell, there is none more justly entitled to its most serious attention, than that of its own immortality.—"The proper study of mankind is man;" and the mind's most important concern is, surely, to assert its right to an existence, which spurns the limits of Time, and presses forward, with unimpaired vigour, into all the boundless regions of Eternity. The well known essays of the Spectator, on this subject, have long continued to charm every reader of taste and feeling. And I think it may be confidently asserted, that, for the long train of gloomy and desponding thoughts, which are apt to force themselves on minds unhappily prone to scepticism, there will hardly be found a surer remedy

than the animating pages of Addison.—Bishop Porteus has favoured the lovers of truth with some admirable arguments on this subject, which appear to me so irresistibly conclusive, that I cannot forego the pleasure of transcribing them for the present number of the *Monitor*. A careful review of the learned prelate's masterly statement of this all-important question, may possibly lead the enemies of revelation to reflect, that while such reasons exist in favour of the doctrine of immortality, nothing can exceed the folly and danger of their conduct, who act as if *it were a decided point*, that after the present life, there will be no future state of existence.

"In the first place, then, (says this excellent prelate) *if we admit that this life is the whole of our being*, what a strange and unaccountable scene of things presents itself?—We have, in that case, an active principle within us, which has every imaginable appearance of being distinct from the body, immaterial, indiscerptible, and indissoluble; yet it turns out to be nothing more than mere matter, endued with qualities diametrically opposite to its most essential properties; it is dissolved with the body, and loses all sensation, consciousness, and reflection forever in the grave. We are evidently distinguished from, and raised above the brute, by a variety of astonishing fa-

culties and powers, which seem plainly designed for some nobler scene of action than this; yet with the brutes we perish, and all the rich endowments of our minds are wasted on us to no purpose.—We are daily making advances, both in knowledge and virtue; we have a large field of improvement, both moral and intellectual, before our eyes; yet, in the very midst of our progress, we are stopped short by the hand of Death, and never reach that state of perfection, of which we seem capable, and which we ardently desire.—We are formed with ideas and expectations of happiness, which are everlastingly disappointed; with a thirst for future fame, of which we shall never be conscious; with a passionate longing for immortality, which was never meant to be gratified;—every part of our constitution shows that we are accountable for our conduct; every remorse of conscience is a proof that we are so; there is a Superior, who has given us a rule to walk by, who has a right to inquire whether we have conformed to that rule; yet that inquiry is *never* made. The world in which we are placed is one continued scene of probation. We appear to be sent into it with no other view, but to show how we can behave, under all that variety of difficult and distressful circumstances into which, by one means or other, we are continually thrown. Yet our behaviour pas-

ses totally unregarded. We perfom *our* parts; but the judge who has tried us, forgets to perform *his*. Our trial is finished, and no consequences follow; no sentence is pronounced; we are neither rewarded for having acted well, nor punished for having acted ill. We conceive ourselves to be the subjects of an Almighty Governor, who has given us a system of laws for our direction. Yet he appears to be perfectly indifferent whether we observe those laws or not—His friends and his enemies fare frequently alike; nay, the former are often punished with the heaviest afflictions, and the latter rewarded with every earthly enjoyment. There has, in fine, been, from the first ages of the world, down to this moment, an almost universal agreement and consent of all mankind in the belief or apprehension of a future state of existence; and yet this turns out to be nothing more than a delusive imagination, though impressed so deeply, by nature itself, on every human breast.

What now can be imagined more strange and inexplicable; more absurd and inconsistent; more replete with disorder, confusion and misery; more unworthy the wisdom, the justice, the goodness of the Supreme Being, than the frame of man and the constitution of the world, on a supposition that there is no future state of existence?

But when, on the other hand, you extend your view beyond the limits of *this* life and take in the consideration of *another*, what an alteration does this instantly make in the appearance of every thing within and without us!—The mist that before rested on the face of the earth, vanishes away, and discovers a scene of the utmost order, beauty, harmony and regularity. The moment our relation to another world is known, all perplexity is cleared up, and all inconsistencies are reconciled.

We then find ourselves composed of two parts, a material body, and an immaterial soul; and the seemingly incompatible properties of matter and spirit, instead of being intermixed and incorporated together in one substance, have each their distinct province assigned them in our compound frame, and reside in separate substances, suited to their respective natures. But though different from each other, they are closely united together. By this union we are allied to the visible and invisible, the material, and the spiritual world, and stand, as it were, on the confines of each; and when the body reverts to earth, the soul betakes itself to that world of spirits to which itbelongs. Those extraordinary faculties of the human mind, which seem far beyond what the uses of this short life require, become highly proper and suitable to a being

that is designed for eternity, and are nothing more than what is necessary to prepare it for that heavenly country, which is its proper home, and is to be its everlasting abode. There they will have full room to open and expand themselves, and to display a degree of vigour and action not to be attained in the present life. When once it is certain that we are to give an account of ourselves hereafter, there is then a plain reason why we are free agents; why a rule is given us to walk by; why we have a power of deviating from or conforming to it; why, in short, we undergo a previous examination at the bar of our consciences; before we appear at the tribunal of our great Judge. Our thirst for fame, for happiness, for immortality, will, on a supposition of a future existence, serve some better purpose than to disappoint and distress us. They are all natural desires with objects that correspond to them: and will each of them meet with that gratification in another life, which they in vain look for in this. Nay, even that unequal distribution of good and evil, at which we are so apt to repine, and those heavy afflictions that sometimes press so hard on the best of men, are all capable of an easy solution, the moment we take a future life into account. This world then is only part of a system. It was never intended for a state of *retribution*, but of *probation*.

Here we are only *tried;* it is hereafter we are to be *rewarded* or punished. The evils we meet with, considered in this light, assume a very different aspect. They are wise, and even benevolent provisions, to put our virtues to the proof; to produce in us that temper, and those dispositions, which are necessary preparations for immortal glory.

Thus does the supposition of a future state clear up every difficulty, and disperse the darkness, that otherwise hangs over this part of God's creation. For, *as in the material world*, when we find that the principle of gravitation, upon being applied to the several parts of the universe, explains, in the liveliest and most elegant manner, the situations, appearances, and influencies of the heavenly bodies, and even accounts for all the seeming irregularity and excentricity of their motions, we make no scruple of allowing the existence and operation of such a power:—So, *in the moral system*, when we see that the admission of another life gives an easy solution of the most surprising and otherwise unaccountable phenomena; and is, as it were, a *master key*, that unlocks every intricacy, and opens to us the great plan of Providence in the administration of human affairs, we can no longer, without doing injustice to every rule of just reasoning, refuse our assent to the truth and reality of such a state.

When to such a collective body of evidence, in favour of this most glorious and important doctrine, we add the infinitely stronger proofs which Revelation has afforded us, who can hesitate, for a moment, to acknowledge the certainty of that immortality which has been brought to light by the gospel. Our Divine Master is, indeed, in every instance, and especially in that we have now been considering, the way, the truth, and the life; and whenever we are tempted to desert this heavenly guide, and to *go away* either to philosophy, or to any other instructor, we have our answer ready prepared for us, in that noble and affecting reply of St. Peter to Jesus,—"Lord, to "whom shall we go?—Thou hast the words of Eter- "nal Life; and we believe, and are sure, that thou art "the Christ, the son of the Living God."

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NO. VI.

AN INQUIRY INTO THE HAPPINESS OF A FUTURE STATE.

THE subject which I have selected for the present number of the *Monitor*, is, an answer to an inquiry, whether *hereafter* those connexions will be renewed, which, in the present state, have been dissolved by the hand of death; and what is the nature of that happiness, which the virtuous may hope to enjoy in a future state of existence?—It is a noble and animating speculation, and is calculated to awaken and invigorate the best feelings of the heart. To such of my readers as are steadfast in their belief of Christianity, and whom the delusions of a false and pernicious philosophy have not moved from the hope of the Gospel, it will be, I doubt not, highly inter-

esting. Let us, then, cherish these delightful expectations. When we consign the bodies of our dear friends to the grave, "let us not sorrow as those who have no hope." In our journey through life, while we are permitted to gather the flowers, which a kind Providence has scattered in our path, let us never forget that heavenly home, where those friends who have gone before us, are waiting to receive us. Let us set our affections on that better country, where God will wipe all tears from the eyes of his faithful servants; where "they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

*"I cannot, my dear friend, fully satisfy your inquiry. So far, however, as scripture and reason will be our guides, I will endeavour to accompany you into the pleasing speculation.

To you, who have buried so many dear and amiable friends, and had so short an enjoyment of them here, it is natural to inquire, what you may see, or know of them hereafter: whether you may be able to recognize departed spirits after death, and wherein the joys of heaven will consist.

It is plain, from sacred writ, that our present, *earthly*, will be changed into *glorious* bodies; and our souls, as it were, sublimed or re-modified, as necessary to the enjoyment of future bliss, whatever it may

* Bennet's Letters.

be. Whilst therefore we are, in part, composed of matter, it is impossible that we should have a full conception, or that any adequate representation can be conveyed to us in words, of the real nature and essence of such pleasures, as, in fact, are only adapted to minds of a much superior texture, and to bodies of a more celestial and divine organization. So strong and literally just is that passage—"Eye has not seen, "nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart "of man to conceive, the things which God has pre-"pared for them that love him."—It is sufficient for us to know, that these delights will be of a spiritual nature, proceeding from the Supreme, all-perfect Spirit, and adapted to the fullest capacities of those he has been pleased to glorify; and they will be exquisite as unbounded power, and wisdom, and goodness can bestow; and lasting, as the days of that eternal Heaven in which they spring.

That we shall be able to recognize spirits, and amongst others, those of our nearest intimates, after death, is probable, from the very nature of the soul, which cannot be supposed to lose its consciousness or recollection, whilst the body is sleeping in the dust of the earth—from the possibility, that an exquisite part of our future happiness will arise from reviewing, along with present friends, the trials, temptations, and

sorrows, which we overcame, along with them, upon earth—and more especially, from the attributes of God, which seem pledged to convince us, by (as it were) ocular demonstration, that those who, we are well assured, suffered undeservedly, in various ways here, are rewarded hereafter, and that some guilty persons, who wanted no prosperities in this world, experience all the horrors of another.

To this doctrine, there is but one weak, and ill-founded objection; that the witnessing of the misery of friends, if they died in a sinful state, must be a dreadful abatement of our felicity. That is impossible. The affection betwixt relatives *here* was implanted only for temporary purposes, and will, in some cases, cease after death. The only attachment, *then*, will be, as the only rational one always was, to souls that assimilate in real wisdom, purity, and goodness. We shall love, in our degree, even as God loveth, not with the weakness of passion or instinct, but the unchangeable sublimity of order. They, that do the will of our Father in heaven, will be our fathers and brethren, our sisters, and mothers.

How glorious and inexhaustible a source of happiness does such a prospect open to the virtuous mind!—With what rapture will a tender mother, who left a number of children behind her, with a

thousand anxious apprehensions for their safety, meet them in Heaven, where their innocence is crowned, their trials are finished, and their eternal happiness secured!—With what dutiful transports will children embrace the religious parent, to whose counsels, under Providence, they owe considerably, their present glorification! and what delight must it give both parties to reflect, that death can no more divorce them from each other, nor a grain of sorrow poison their cup of bliss! Affectionate brothers and sisters, unavoidably severed here, by various, important exigencies, with what ardour will they renew their natural connexion, and reciprocate each other's joys!—not a fear to rise upon there future prospects, not a cloud to darken the celestial sky.

Another delightful idea of Heaven is, that it will bring to maturity, all those amiable instincts, which were planted in us by the Deity, whilst we were on earth, but from a multitude of obstacles, or the shortness of life, could not attain their perfection.

Our strong thirst for happiness, which it is universally allowed, was only mocked in this valley of shadows, will be fully gratified in a world of glory.

It will, probably, be so with our passions for knowledge—friendship—society—which when properly directed, are equally virtuous and useful pro-

pensities; and, therefore, alike proceed from the Author of every good and perfect gift.

The wonderous page of Nature will then be plain. The book of Providence will open, in the most legible characters, on the enlarged mind. That mystery of redemption, into which the very angels have been desirous to look, will be unfolded, in all its abysses; and the consequence of such discoveries must be an inexpressible sensation of love, astonishment, and rapture.—"We shall not cease, day or "night, to worship Him that sitteth on the throne, "and the Lamb that has washed us from our sins, in "his own blood."

The case, in all probability, will be the same with Friendship. Friendship, balm of this uneasy state! Inspirer of virtuous thoughts and counsels! Medicine of life! Still chequered, still imperfect upon earth, mixed with caprice, with passion, with insincerity, and often chilled by death, (thousands of *congenial* souls prevented by seas, mountains, reserve of sex, bigotries of religion, peculiarities of education, from ever *uniting*) this friendship, shall, *there*, have all its fullest poignancy, and flourish in immortal bloom. The amiable of all ages and nations shall be assembled together, and frailties and death, and the possibility of separation shall be wholly done away.

Think only of the expansion and luxury the mind enjoys, from unbosoming its pleasures or sorrows to a person upon earth, from the social glow and confidential conversation! and imagine, for a moment, what this privilege must be, where all around us are friends;—where friends are angels—and angels are continually imbibing fresh streams of knowledge, of purity, and graces, in the presence of their God.

And, with respect to the intellectual improvements which we have made here, it may be fairly inferred, that they will not perish in the grave. We shall doubtless, in this respect, rise with the same views and *habits of thinking*, with which we died. How much men, at present, differ from this cause alone, so that the least, and most enlightened, almost appear creatures of another species, needs not be observed. And, though a Newton or a Bacon, would, from an union of goodness only, be happy in the conversation of the most illiterate saint, yet, on all principles of analogy, it may reasonably be presumed, that their bliss could not fail to be infinitely heightened, by the society of those, who like them, had spent a whole life in laudable investigations.

But the grand idea is, that the "great I AM will be present!"—He who is the source of all perfection and blessings! he, who can open in the mind, innume-

rable avenues of inconceivable enjoyment! whose whole creation is but a ray, emanating from the plenitude of His happiness and glory; and who will certainly give his children all that their enlarged faculties can admit, of pleasure and fruition.

Here we are continually mocked with the appearance of happiness, which, on trial, is always found chequered with ill. Here, the sweetest odour has attendant briars; the most delicious landscape has its shade; the most apparently finished enjoyment, its alloy. Even the sweet engaging child and friend, dear to us as our own souls, bring inseparable anxieties, and a thousand unquiet apprehensions for their health, their innocence and peace. Every enviable acquisition is followed with its trouble; every accession of fortune or interest, with its cares; and in the height of seeming, worldly bliss, trouble still will find, through various chinks, its moments of admission. But, in Heaven, all will be unmixed, all will be perfect, all will be serene!

Such is my private opinion of Heaven.—Such is the paradise of my imagination. If it be innocent, I have a right to indulge it; if you think it visionary, you are at liberty to reject it. If it be an error, it is at least a pleasing one; and if it serve to comfort life, or excite us to any laudable improvements, it

has its uses in society, and must ultimately promote the glory of God.

I hope it is true; because time, which dissolves all earthly things, is ever on the wing; and I wish to have my intimacy with you, perpetuated through immortality."

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NO. VII.

THE GREAT ASSIZE *

The faithful administration of public justice is of the first importance to the well being of the community. It seems hardly possible, that the people should not be happy, when equal rights are impartially administered to all; and the state of religion and morality, in every country, will be found to correspond with the degree of purity which attends the unbiassed execution of the laws. Of the excellence of that general principle, which preserves the order of things, and, (which follows of course,) of the important consequences which result from its right or wrong

* The court of sessions was to open at Charleston on the Monday subsequent to the first publication of the present number, and it was considered to be a favourable opportunity of calling the attention of the community to this important subject.

application in human affairs, if any one is inclined to doubt, I beg leave to refer him to the following just and splendid eulogium of the excellent Hooker. " Of " law there can be no less acknowledged, than that " her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmo- " ny of the world. All things in Heaven and earth, " do her homage; the very least as feeling her care, " and the greatest as not exempt from her power. " Angels, and men, and creatures of what condition " soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet " all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mo- " ther of their peace and joy."

A conviction of the truth of these remarks has determined me in the choice of the subject, which I this day lay before my readers. I am indebted for it to an admirable discourse on the day of Judgment, delivered by bishop Horne, before lord chief justice Mansfield, which for elegance of composition, strength, and originality of thought, has been justly considered among the best sermons in the English language. Such a work is, at all times, entitled to the attention of every description of readers; but it acquires a peculiar propriety, at a moment when the ministers of justice are about to assemble, on the integrity of whose decisions depend the property, repu-

tation and lives of a considerable portion of their fellow-citizens.

After a just and animated eulogium on those sacred institutions, which mankind have established, to overawe the lawless oppressor, to defend the cause of unprotected innocence, and to preserve the peace and welfare of society, the preacher points to those cases, which no human authority can reach, and enumerates a sad catalogue of evils, which no human laws can remedy. Then, in a strain of sublime eloquence, he leads the minds of his auditors to the contemplation of a scene of astonishing grandeur, and thus displays to the eye of Faith, the glories and the terror of the great day of final retribution.

" And now, the voice of that trumpet, which was once heard from the top of Sinai, shall again be heard from Heaven, and the Judge of the whole earth shall make his entry with power and great glory; having in his retinue an innumerable company of angels and the spirits of the righteous. Thus attended, He shall descend towards us, riding upon the clouds of Heaven, and take his seat on the throne prepared for Him.—There he shall be seen, in the form and fashion of a man, exceeding glorious, clothed with the robes of majesty and honour, from whence we may suppose him opening his commission in those words

of his own—' All power is given unto me in Heaven ' and in earth. The Father judgeth no man; but ' hath committed all judgment unto the Son.' The apostles are placed around him; the court is set, and all things are prepared for him who is to be the judge of the quick and the dead. Let us, therefore, transfer our thoughts from a temporary tribunal to the throne of eternal Judgment." A consideration of the awful solemnities of the great day of the Lord, will suggest the best rules for the conduct of those who are concerned in human judicatures.

Mindful, therefore, of " that man, by whom God shall judge the world in righteousness," *he who sitteth on the seat of judgment*, as the representative of an earthly governor, will consider himself likewise as *his* minister, by whom " kings reign and princes decree judgment;" and at whose bar kings and princes, and all earthly potentates, must one day appear. The care, then, of the magistrate who goeth up to the judgment seat, will be, to put on righteousness as a glorious and beautiful robe; and to render his tribunal a fit emblem of that eternal throne, of which justice and judgment are the habitation.

Mindful of those holy and exalted personages, who shall sit with their Lord upon twelve thrones,

judging the twelve tribes of Israel, *they to whom the laws of their country commit the lives and properties of their fellow subjects*, will not suffer themselves to be biassed by any worldly considerations. They will neither be intimidated by the frowns of the mighty, nor seduced by the promises of the opulent, to depart one step from the disinterested uprightness and integrity, which characterize the apostles of the Son of God.

Mindful of that true and faithful witness, which every man carries in his own bosom, which no gift can blind, no power can silence, or prevent its appearing, to testify concerning his thoughts, his words, and his actions, at the last day, *they who are called upon to give evidence*, will do it with simplicity and sincerity; neither palliating the crimes of the guilty, nor aggravating the calamities of the wretched; but so speaking the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, as their consciences will infallibly do, and as they expect help from the God of their salvation, at that dreadful hour.

Mindful of that blessed and gracious Spirit, "who now maketh intercession for us, with unutterable groanings," and who shall plead our cause at the judgment seat of Christ, *the advocate* will rejoice in the godlike task of patronizing the injured and oppressed; of contributing by his skill and industry, towards the elucidation of truth, the detection of

villainy, and the vindication of innocence. But, he will never employ his learning for the establishment of falsehood, nor display his eloquence in favour of injustice.

Mindful of their happy lot, whom mercy shall receive to glory, and of their sad estate, whom justice shall hurry away to torments, *we shall all* provide against that day, which is to determine our fate for everlasting ages. Should a door be opened to those unhappy wretches, who are now reserved in chains, to be brought forth in judgment before an earthly judge, how eagerly would they press into it? Could sorrow for their past offences, and unfeigned resolutions of amendment, procure for them a pardon, restore them to a state of probation, and enable them to lay hold on life, how thankful would they be for the offer, how readily would they close with the proposal! This favour is graciously vouchsafed to us. For, "behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." The Judge standeth before the door, but his entrance is not yet. The evangelical act of grace continueth in full force, and all are invited to partake of the benefits of it; that so, having repented, and believed the gospel, having kept the faith in a pure conscience, and kept it until the end, they may obtain their pardon under the seal of the living God, and receive the

promised reward, in the day of eternal recompense. For, " there is no condemnation to them that are in " Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but af- " ter the spirit." While, therefore, we bless God, who preserveth to us the administration of justice in our land, let the present solemnity, by reminding us of the trial we likewise must undergo, be made profitable in things pertaining not only to this life, but also to that which is to come; that so, when we shall all meet again, after our separation by the chances of life, and the stroke of death, we may remember that we met on this day; and remember with pleasure that we met not in vain.

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NO. VIII.

CHRISTIANITY FAVOURABLE TO THE DISCHARGE OF ALL THE DUTIES OF LIFE.

It has been often boldly asserted, by the enemies of our holy religion; that christianity incapacitates its followers from the performance of their duty on this earthly theatre, and is opposed to the present constitution of things. It may be well suited, they say, to the monastic rigours and gloomy solitude of the cloister, but is repugnant to the busy scenes of active life; a religion, better fitted for a community of angels, than of men; and, however exactly calculated for the scenes and enjoyments of a future and spiritual world, totally inimical to that system, which Providence has

established in the present stage of our existence. This is a rash and dangerous conclusion, unsupported by facts, and contradicted by a cloud of witnesses. The following extract will be found applicable to the subject. It is taken from a view of christianity, by the celebrated Mr. WILBERFORCE; a man, whose own life is the best comment on his writings, and who shines equally conspicuous, as a gentleman, a scholar, a statesman, and a christian.

I do not despair of the utility of this subject, to those who are sincerely disposed to embrace the christian faith.—The objects which it presents, to stimulate the activity, and to influence the conduct of mankind, are, to my mind, conclusive evidence of its divine origin. Let us open the sacred volume and judge for ourselves. Is it possible to conceive stronger motives, to deter from the commission of evil, and to lead you to the performance of virtue, than meet your eye in every page of the gospel?—Hope and fear, love and hatred, desire and aversion, all the great springs of human action, are set in motion; every chord of the heart vibrates to the touch of an invisible and powerful hand. You see at once, that the tendency of every doctrine, the object of every command, is the banishment of misery, and the increase and diffusion of happiness.

If by its fruits we discover the nature of the tree; if the rose is known by its fragrance; if causes are acknowledged by their effects; if it be the business of religion to make us holy and happy; christianity must be true; the revelation it offers to mankind, is divine;—JESUS CHRIST is, indeed, the SON of GOD.

" If it be (says this ingenious writer) our lot to undergo evils of more than ordinary magnitude, we are animated under them by reflecting, that we are hereby more conformed to the example of our blessed master. By these also we learn to correct the world's false estimate of things, and to " look through the shallowness of earthly grandeur;" to venerate what is truly excellent and noble, though under a despised and degraded form; and to cultivate within ourselves that true magnanimity, which can alone make us rise superior to the smiles or frowns of the world; that dignified composure of soul, which no earthly incidents can ruffle or destroy. Instead of repining at any of the little occasional inconveniences, which we may meet in our passage through life, we are almost ashamed of the multiplied comforts and enjoyments of our condition, when we think of him, who, though the " Lord of Glory," had not where to lay his head. From the scene of our Saviour's weakness and degradation, we follow him, in idea, into the realms of glo-

ry, where " he is enthroned on high, angels and principalities, and powers being made subject to him: but though changed in place, yet not in nature—He is still full of sympathy and love; and having died " to save his people from their sins," he ever liveth to make intercession for them. Cheered by this animating view, the christian's fainting spirits revive; under the heaviest burthens he feels his strength recruited; and when all around him is dark and stormy, he can lift up an eye to Heaven, radiant with hope, and glistening with gratitude. At such a season, no dangers can alarm, no opposition can move, no provocations can irritate. He may almost adopt, as the language of his sober exultation, what in the philosopher was but an idle rant; and, considering that it is only the garment of mortality which is subject to the rents of fortune, while his spirit, cheered by the divine support, keeps its peace within, secure and unassailable he can, sometimes almost triumph at the stake, or on the scaffold, and cry out, amidst the severest buffets of adversity, " Thou beatest but the case of Anaxarchus." Often, however, alas! emotions of another kind fill the christian with grief and confusion; and conscious of having acted unworthy of his high calling—perhaps of having exposed himself to the just censure of a world, ready enough to spy out his infirmities, he

seems to himself almost "to have crucified the SON of GOD afresh, and put him to open shame." But let neither his joys intoxicate, nor his sorrows too much depress him. Let him still remember, that his *chief business, while on earth, is not to meditate, but to act;* that the seeds of moral corruption are apt to spring up within him, and that it is requisite for him to watch over his heart with incessant care. In short, that he is to demean himself, in all the common affairs of life, like an accountable creature, who is waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Often, therefore, he questions himself—"am I em- "ploying my time, my fortune, my bodily and men- "tal powers, so as to be able to 'render up my ac- "count with joy, and not with grief?'—am I adorn- "ing the doctrines of my God, my Saviour, in all "things; and proving that the servants of Christ, an- "imated by a principle of filial affection, which ren- "ders their work a service of perfect freedom, are ca- "pable of as active and persevering exertions, as the "votaries of fame, or the slaves of ambition, or the "drudges of avarice?"

Thus, without interruption to his labours, he may interpose occasional thoughts of things unseen, and amidst the many little intervals of business, may calmly look upwards to the heavenly advocate, who

is ever pleading the cause of his people, and obtaining for them needful supplies of grace and consolation. These realizing views give the Christian a relish for the worship and service of the heavenly world, and if these blessed images, "seen but through a glass darkly," can thus refresh the soul, what must be its state, when, on the morning of the resurrection, it shall awake to the unclouded vision of celestial glory! when, doubts and fears no more disquieting, and the painful consciousness of remaining imperfections no longer weighing down the spirit, the faithful shall enter upon the fruition of "those joys, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of men to conceive," and shall bear their part in that blessed anthem, "Salvation to our God who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever."

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NO. IX.

ON THE PERFECTION OF THE CHARACTER OF JESUS CHRIST.

Among the multitude of proofs which solicit our attention, and press forward, on every side, to bear witness to the truth of christianity, one of the most striking is, the *perfection* of the character of its great Author. We boldly challenge all history to produce its parallel:—Nay, we go farther. We defy our adversaries to call from the regions of fancy, a character of equal purity to that, which four poor men of no learning, have drawn from real life. The finest genius of antiquity never even in imagination, formed a picture of such excellence, as these illiterate, but faithful historians, have portrayed in the life of their beloved master.

The best and wisest of mankind have been seduced by error, led captive by folly, and debased by guilt. He who keeps both his heart and his actions with the most watchful vigilance and never-ceasing care will find, alas! too often, his heart teeming with the seeds of corruption, and his actions bearing witness to the bitterness of the parent soil. The sun, in its most splendid meridian, has its spots; the purest gold is not without its alloy: and some envious cloud sullies the glories of the brightest day: Imperfection clings to every thing human:—He, alone, whom the gospel brings to our view, presents that model of perfection and spotless purity, which proves the writers to have been inspired; and that he was, the long-expected Messiah, the desire of all nations, the eternal Son of God!

"*Learn of me*," were the words of this divine teacher, whose whole life was one continued exertion of unequalled benevolence, and who, in the emphatic language of an apostle, *went about, doing good.* In his doctrines, his discourses, and his precepts, he taught us what Heaven required us to do. In his life and actions, he showed us how our duty might best be performed. Having discovered to us the mount of holiness, he cut a path through the steep and difficult ascent: He walked in it himself, and called upon us to tread in his steps.

The frequent contemplation of the character of our Lord, will be productive of vast advantage, and full of the sweetest consolation, to every pious mind. He will hardly complain of the tattered garments, and scanty fare of poverty, who considers that a manger was the cradle of Jesus, and that the carpenter's humble roof sheltered the sacred head of the Son of God. Who will repine at the ingratitude of mankind, when he remembers, that the Friend of the human race was betrayed by one of his bosom companions, denied by another, and, in the dark hour of adversity, deserted by all the rest?—Let us, then, endeavour to imitate, as far as our weak natures will permit, the unblemished holiness, and undeviating rectitude, of our heavenly Master.

" He that gives alms to the poor," says the pious and excellent Jeremy Taylor, " takes Jesus by " the hand. He that patiently endures injuries and " affronts, helps him to bear his cross. He that " comforts his brother in affliction, gives an amiable " kiss of peace to Jesus. He that bathes his own and " his neighbour's sins in tears of penance and com- " passion, washes his master's feet. We lead Jesus " into the recesses of *our* heart by holy meditations; " and we enter into *his* heart, when we express him

" in our actions. He that considers with what affec-
" tions of spirit, with what effusions of love, Jesus
" prayed; what fervours and assiduity, what innocen-
" cy of wish, what modesty of posture, what subor-
" dination to his Father, were in all his devotions, is
" taught and excited to holy and religious prayer.
" The rare sweetness of his deportment, in all the
" agonies of his passion, his charity to his enemies,
" his sharp reprehensions to the Scribes and Phari-
" sees; his ingenuousness towards all men, are living
" and effectual sermons, to teach us patience and hu-
" mility, and zeal and candid simplicity, and justice,
" in all our actions."

The following beautiful extract from one of Sherlock's discourses, is so applicable to the present subject, and comes with such force directly to the heart, that I cannot resist the pleasure of transcribing it for the benefit of my readers:—

" Go to your natural religion; lay before her Mahomet and his disciples, arrayed in armour and in blood, riding in triumph over the spoils of thousands, and tens of thousands, who fell by his victorious sword;—show her the cities which he set in flames, the countries which he ravaged and destroyed, and the miserable distress of all the inhabitants of the earth. When she has viewed him in this scene, carry her

into his retirements; show her the prophet's chamber, his concubines and his wives; let her see his adultery, and hear him allege revelation and his divine commission to justify his lust and his oppression. When she is tired with this prospect, then show her the blessed Jesus, humble and meek, doing good to all the sons of men, patiently instructing both the ignorant and the perverse; let her see him in his most retired privacies; let her follow him to the mount, and hear his devotions and supplications to God; carry her to his table, to view his poor fare, and hear his heavenly discourse; let her see him injured, but not provoked; let her attend him to the tribunal, and consider the patience with which he endured the scoffs and reproaches of his enemies; lead her to his cross, and let her view him in the agony of death, and hear his last prayer for his persecutors.—"*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!*"

Reader! examine both pictures with seriousness and attention. Dismiss levity; be superior to prejudice; banish pride; lay your hand on your heart, and say, which is the prophet of God?

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NO. X.

ON THE MEEKNESS AND GENTLENESS OF CHRIST. PORTRAIT OF PATIENCE.

THE innumerable beauties of nature are all calculated to delight the attentive beholder; yet, while wandering over this diversified scenery, he dwells with peculiar pleasure on the refreshing verdure that everywhere meets the eye. So, the christian, in contemplating the life and actions of his Lord, although every part is fraught with instruction, and full of grace, and beauty, and truth, rests with unmingled satisfaction, on the *mildness* which shines throughout the character of Christ. Isaiah, "rapt into future times," thus describes the illustrious object of all prophecy;

"a bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench." St. Paul, when he would persuade his converts by an argument of more than common weight, beseeches them, with a warmth peculiar to himself, '*by the meekness and gentleness of Christ:*' and our Lord himself, when he calls us to *learn of him*, adds as the reason of our imitation, "*for I am meek and lowly of heart.*" It is this meekness and lowliness of heart, this quiet spirit, this gentleness to others, this patience under all the accidents of life, that throws at so immeasurable a distance from our divine teacher, all the sages and philosophers that ever appeared to guide and instruct mankind. This is the brightest ray in the glory, which encircles the head of our Emanuel; the peculiar fragrance of the rose of Sharon: It is the chord at whose touch the christian's heart vibrates with rapture; the leading feature, which distinguishes every member of the family of Christ.

Surely then, it becomes every one, who has enlisted himself under the banners of the cross, to study to attain that grace, which comes recommended by such a variety of arguments; and to practise that virtue, which his beloved leader takes such frequent opportunities to display. Ye, whom the sunshine of prosperity has ripened into premature luxuriance,

whose passions have gained strength by indulgence and excess, *learn of Christ;* and remember that he, who had all nature at his command, submitted himself to a voluntary state of penance; and, resisting the solicitations of nature, fasted forty days and forty nights, in the dreary wilderness. Ye, whom the tooth of slander has wounded, and who groan under the oppressive weight of unmerited reproach, *learn of Christ*, and reflect, that your great master was numbered among the transgressors; and that he, who was benevolence itself, was denounced as a blasphemer, an enemy of mankind, and unworthy to live. When your hearts prompt you to resentment, learn of him, who bore these unequalled injuries without repining, and who when he was reviled, reviled not again. "*He* "*was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a* "*sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not* "*his mouth.*"—Ye, who mourn under the correcting hand of Providence, who bend with anguish over the ashes of the friends of your affection, the beloved partners of your hearts;—ye sons and daughters of affliction, who bedew with tears the turf, fresh springing over a parent's grave;—ye mothers, who refuse to be comforted, because your children are not,—*learn of Christ;* be resigned, be patient, and remember him, who in the hour of agony, meekly bowed his head,

and said with pious submission, "Father, not my will, but thine be done!"

Let us then conduct ourselves as becomes scholars in the school of Christ. When the storm of passion arises, let us, like the apostles, awaken our master, to save us from this shipwreck of the soul. To use the words of an old English divine, "He that would not have "his reason confounded, or his discourse useless, or his "family a den of lions; he that would not have his mar- "riage a daily duel, or his society troublesome, or his "friendship formidable, or his feasts bitter; he that de- "lights not to have his discipline cruel, or his govern- "ment tyrannical, or his disputations violent, or his "civilities unmannerly, or his charity a rudeness, or "himself miserable upon every accident, and in all "changes of his life, must mortify his anger, study to "attain a quiet spirit, and to imitate the gentleness and "patience of Christ. For it concerns us, as much as "peace, and wisdom, and nobleness, and charity, and "felicity are worth, to be at peace in our breasts, and "to be pleased with all God's providence, and to be "in charity with every thing, and with every man."

I know not how I can with more propriety conclude the present number, than by the following extract from one of bishop HORNE's discourses on the virtue of patience. It is full of spirit and animation,

and the conclusion reminds us of that most eloquent description of charity, which St. Paul has left on sacred record, and which has invariably drawn forth the admiration of mankind.

" The patience which we so much admire in " God, shone forth yet more amazingly in the person " of his Son Jesus Christ. For was ever patience like " that patience, which, descending from a throne of " glory, bore a long imprisonment in the womb, to " sanctify sinners; and lay in a stable, to bring them " to a kingdom? Behold the master baptized by " the servant, and he who alone could give remission " of sins, submitting to be washed in the laver of re- " generation. He fasts forty days, who filleth all things " living with plenteousness, and who is himself the " bread of life. He endures the temptations of Satan, " and answers them one by one from the scriptures, " who could have remanded him to his chains in a " moment, by the word of his power. With his dis- " ciples he lived, not as their Lord, but the servant of " all. How tenderly did he bear with all their igno- " rance and infirmities, leading them on gently, as " they were able to follow him! And that they might " never refuse to do offices of kindness for each other, " he washed all their feet, and amongst them those " of Judas, from whom he meekly received the kiss

" that betrayed him. How patiently did he endure
" the contradiction of sinners, and, in his disputes with
" the Jews, how lovingly did he try to persuade the in-
" credulous, and to melt by kindness the hearts that
" were hardened! How quietly did he submit to the
" insolence of the proud, and give place to the fury of the
" wrathful, desirous, even to his last hour, to save, if
" possible, those murderers of the prophets, those re-
" bels against their God! But when the time of pas-
" sion came, what railings and revilings were patient-
" ly heard by him, what mockery and insult patient-
" ly suffered! How was he wounded, who heals
" every disease? How was he crowned with thorns,
" who crowns his martyrs with unfading garlands?
" How was he stript naked, who clothes the field with
" flowers, and all the world with robes, and the whole
" globe with the canopy of heaven, and the dead with
" immortality? How was he fed with gall and vinegar,
" who reaches out to his people the fruits of Paradise,
" and the cup of salvation? Innocent and righteous,
" nay innocence and righteousness itself, he was num-
" bered with the transgressors. The truth was oppres-
" sed by false witnesses; he was judged who is to
" judge the world; the word of God became dumb as a
" lamb before his shearers. And when, at the cruci-
" fixion, the heavens were confounded, and the earth

" trembled, and the sun, that he might not be forced
" to behold the villainy of the Jews, withdrew his shin-
" ing, and left the world in darkness, still the bles-
" sed Jesus said nothing, and betrayed no emotion of
" anger, but endured without murmuring all that earth
" and hell could lay upon him, till he had put the last
" stroke to this most finished picture of perfect pati-
" ence, and prayed for his murderers; whom he has been
" ever since, and is now ready to receive, upon their
" repentance, not only to pardon, but to a participa-
" tion of the glories of his kingdom."

" Patience commends us to God, and keeps us
" his. Patience is the guardian of faith, the preserver
" of peace, the cherisher of love, the teacher of humi-
" lity: Patience governs the flesh, strengthens the spi-
" rit, sweetens the temper, stifles anger, extinguishes
" envy, subdues pride; she bridles the tongue, refrains
" the hand, tramples upon temptations, endures per-
" secutions, consummates martyrdom: Patience pro-
" duces unity in the church, loyalty in the state, har-
" mony in families and societies; she comforts the poor
" and moderates the rich; she makes us humble in pros-
" perity, cheerful in adversity, unmoved by calumny
" and reproach; she teaches us to forgive those who
" have injured us, and to be the first in asking for-
" giveness of those whom we have injured; she de

" lights the faithful, and invites the unbelieving; she " adorns the woman, and approves the man; is loved in " a child, praised in a young man, admired in an old " man: she is beautiful in each sex, and every age. " Behold her appearance and her attire! Her counte- " nance is calm and serene as the face of heaven, un- " spotted by the shadow of a cloud, and no wrinkle of " grief or anger is seen in her forehead. Her eyes are " as the eyes of doves for meekness, and on her eye- " brows sit Cheerfulness and Joy. Her mouth is love- " ly in silence; her complexion and colour that of in- " nocence and security; while, like the virgin, the " daughter of Sion, she shakes her head at the adversa- " ry, despising and laughing him to scorn. She is " clothed in the robes of the martyrs, and in her hand " she holds a sceptre in the form of a CROSS. She " rides not in the whirlwind and stormy tempest of " passion, but her throne is the humble and con- " trite heart, and her kingdom is the kingdom of " peace."

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NO. XI.

ON THE UNION OF THE DIVINE AND HUMAN NATURES IN THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST, AND THE ARGUMENT WHICH IT AFFORDS FOR THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY.

UNTIL the gospel was preached to the world, it never entered into the heart of man, to conceive a mystery so profound, so transcendently sublime, so infinitely beyond the utmost stretch of the most daring imagination, as the union of the divine and human natures, which revelation has declared to us, in the person of Jesus Christ. And, when I compare the astonishing grandeur and originality of the thought, with the weak and timid character, the simplicity and ignorance, of the men who proclaimed it

to the world. I cannot help considering it as a strong evidence in favour of the inspiration of the evangelists and consequent truth of christianity.

To the candid deist, who is honest in his doubts and scruples, and earnest in his endeavour to know that religion which comes from God, I would press the consideration of this species of proof. Examine, I would say, the records which four unlettered historians have left, of the life and death of their Master; and tell me, if every circumstance, impartially and attentively considered, does not bespeak the person of whom they write, to have been more than man.—True it is, that you behold him in scenes of deep distress, of bitter agony, of sad and painful humiliation: But let not this offend you. "The sun was covered with a cloud," says a fine writer, "but it was the sun still; "and often manifested, through the cloud, the power "and brightness of its beams." He was born in a manger, but a choir of angels celebrated his birth, a new star shed its lustre over the place where he lay, and Arabia poured her gold and spices at his feet. A sanguinary tyrant sought his infant life; but the angel of the Lord saved him from the hand of the destroyer. He, who was without spot or blemish, submitted to be baptized by the preacher of repentance; but Jordan became the scene of his glory, and a voice from Hea-

ven proclaimed him the well-beloved Son of God. When you see him wandering from place to place; persecuted by his own countrymen; despised by those who were, themselves, the scorn of mankind; hated, calumniated and reviled; you behold the man of sorrows, who had not where to lay his head. But, follow him to the tomb of Lazarus, and see the grave give up its dead, at the command of his all-powerful word; behold him hushing into peace the raging tempest, and rescuing from the waves his trembling, sinking disciple; figure to yourself the glorious scene on mount Tabor, when his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light; see the cleansed leper worshipping at his feet; the diseased woman touching the hem of his garment; and the multitude escorting him in triumph to Jerusalem; behold him that was born blind, returning from the pool of Siloam, rejoicing in the light of Heaven, and gazing enraptured on the glorious beauties of nature; and ask yourself, if ever man wrought such works as this man? No! it was the Lord of nature alone, who could command the elements which his power had created, and suspend the laws which his wisdom had framed. "It was one," says bishop Sherlock, "who loved you so "well, as to die for you; yet was too great to be held "a prisoner in the grave: He was a man, and there-

" fore he died; He was the son of God, and therefore " he rose from the dead."

It is unquestionably true, that the incarnation of the Deity is a profound mystery, beyond the comprehension of human reason, and of which the apostle has declared, that even the angels desire to look into it. But this astonishing doctrine, which was " to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness," and which infidelity triumphantly displays, as an insuperable objection to the truth of christianity, is, in fact, one of the strongest presumptions in its favour. If natural and revealed religion proceed from the same author, is it not most irrational to expect, that the features which everywhere characterize the one, should nowhere be discernible in the other? Examine the visible works of the Deity; cast your eye on the surrounding wonders of creation; and if the greatness of their Maker is not unsearchable, and his ways past finding out? The sun, that warms and invigorates you, the vital principle that animates you, the blood that flows through your veins, that power of the mind which enables you to *doubt*, and the prompt obedience, which even dull, unconcious matter pays to laws, which the sublimest of human intelligences cannot fully comprehend;—what are all these, but a series of phænome-

na, to draw forth the admiration, and to humble in the dust the presumption of man? All nature is full of mystery. Even natural religion itself, is founded on the greatest and most incomprehensible of all mysteries, the self-existence and eternity of God. He, therefore, who rejects revelation, because it declares some truths which he cannot understand, must, if true to his own principles go farther; he must deny the authority of all religion, and shake hands with the atheist himself. Let not, then, the mysteries of christianity offend you. Her most awful doctrines are, indeed, infinitely *above*, but are in no instance *contrary* to reason. Instead, therefore, of raising vain and impious objections against the best and purest system of morality and religion, that ever was proposed to the acceptance of mankind; rejoice that all that concerns your happiness is clearly revealed, and that your duty to God, to the world, and to yourself, is transcribed in the gospel, in characters so plain, that he that runs may read.

I think I cannot better conclude the present number, than by the following most eloquent passage from the works of a writer, whom no one will suspect of an undue bias in favour of our religion.—When we quote the opinions of men who believe the scriptures, and would give up the whole world, ra-

ther than surrender their hope of happiness, through the merits of their Saviour, our adversaries may be ready to deny the authorities which we bring forward: But on this occasion we meet them on their own ground, and produce, in support of our cause, the unequivocal concession of an enemy.

" I will confess to you," says Rousseau, " that the majesty of the scriptures strikes me with admiration, as the purity of the gospel hath its influence on my heart:—Peruse the works of our philosophers, with all their pomp of diction; how mean, how contemptible are they, compared with the scriptures!—Is it possible that a book, at once so simple and sublime, should be merely the work of man?—Is it possible that the sacred personage, whose history it contains, should be himself a mere man? Do we find that he assumed the tone of an enthusiast or ambitious sectary?—What sweetness, what purity, in his manners! what an affecting gracefulness in his delivery! what sublimity in his maxims!—what profound wisdom in his discourses! what presence of mind in his replies!—how great the command over his passions! Where is the man, where the philosopher, who could so live and so die, without weakness and without ostentation?—When Plato described his imaginary

good man, with all the shame of guilt, yet meriting the highest rewards of virtue, he describes exactly the character of Jesus Christ: The resemblance was so striking, that all the christian fathers percieved it."

"What prepossession, what blindness must it be to compare the son of Sophronicus to the son of Mary! What an infinite disproportion is there between them!—Socrates, dying without pain or ignominy, easily supported his character to the last; and if his death, however easy, had not crowned his life, it might have been doubted whether Socrates with all his wisdom, was any thing more than a vain sophist.—He invented, it is said, the theory of morals. Others, however, had before put them in practice; he had only to say, therefore, what they had done, and to reduce their examples to precept. But where could Jesus learn among his competitors, that pure and sublime morality, of which he only hath given us both precept and example! The death of Socrates, peaceably philosophizing with his friends, appears the most agreeable that could be wished for; that of Jesus, expiring in the midst of agonizing pains, abused, insulted, and accused, by a whole nation, is the most horrible that could be feared. Socrates, in receiving the cup of poison, blessed the weeping executioner

who administered it; but Jesus, in the midst of excruciating tortures, prayed for his merciless tormentors.—Yes! if the life and death of Socrates were those of a Sage, the life and death of Jesus were those of a GOD

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NO. XII.

LETTER TO THE MONITOR.

THE CONCURRING BELIEF OF THE WISEST AND MOST VIRTUOUS MEN, A STRONG PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF CHRISTIANITY.

MR. MONITOR,

I CONFESS myself to be one of those, who on the appearance of your first number, while they honoured the good intention it announced, could not but smile at your enthusiasm, in expecting to have any readers in this busy and gay metropolis. I owe it to you, and to my own conscience, to tell you how much I was mistaken. Your numbers, I find, are eagerly looked for, and read with avidity. Ladies are impatient to know what the *Monitor* has to say, even before

they look for the very interesting intelligence, commonly contained under the head of *marriages*, or a fresh display of *fancy goods:* and pious and enlightened parents have been heard to enjoin it upon their children, to read the *Monitor*, with attention, and carefully preserve them for a reperusal.

Thus far, then, your good intention has been answered, to a considerable extent: and the rare praise is your's of winning a respectful attention to serious things, in the columns of a newspaper. Although, however you have many readers, there are still persons, who cannot so far get the better of the horror, which a religious publication, at first sight brings with it to their minds, as to read any of your numbers. Have you read any of the papers, under the title of *Monitor?* said one of your readers, the other day, to a friend of wit and letters:—I have not. What is the subject of them? Religion. A smile of contempt told how absurd he thought his friend's inquiry.

Now, sir, this is one of no small number, who are possessed with the strange conceit, that religious speculations are beneath the notice of sensible men; and fit only to interest the weak, the superstitious, and the timid. A belief of religion they consider as a degradation of human intellect. They dwell on the names of the wits and philosophers, who have laughed or

reasoned their deluded fellow-mortals out of this species of folly, and are persuaded, that to be known to read a religious publication, (except occasionally one of BLAIR's Sermons, as a work of taste, or a piece of beautiful composition) would ruin their pretensions to the character of men of sense and letters.

You would labour to a very good purpose, indeed, Mr. *Monitor*, if you could, by any means, induce such persons to employ any of the time which they devote to books, on these subjects. They are not by any means to be considered as undeserving of your attention. There are many of them, I doubt not, among the friends whom you esteem, and whose general character is that of honourable and amiable men. I am persuaded, you might lead some of them to admit, that to entertain a firm and animated belief of the truth of christianity, is not folly or weakness; and that to read a work on religion, is neither a waste of time, nor an employment unworthy of a good understanding or a refined taste. At least, it is in your power to convince them, how erroneous is the impression, which they seem to entertain, that all the wit, all the talent, all the learning and virtue in the world, are on the side of those, who have rejected revelation. You could prove, perhaps, that the number of these will not admit of a comparison, in any of the various walks of intellec-

tual excellency and glory, with that of those, who having heartily embraced the discoveries of christianity, have lived by its rules, and died in a confident reliance on its promises. From such a fact it must necessarily follow, either that there is such a thing as *rationally* believing and *sincerely* professing, the religion of the scriptures, or that the most learned men in the world have often been the greatest fools, and the most virtuous, the greatest hypocrites.

There is a great deal of elegance and force in some observations connected with the subject of these remarks, in a speech of Mr. ERSKINE's, (late lord chancellor of Great Britain) at a celebrated trial in the court of King's Bench. I wish you would introduce an extract from it, into one of your numbers. It might be done, perhaps, with benefit and satisfaction to your readers in general, whilst it would particularly oblige your humble servant,

CATECHUMEN.

I will not dissemble the pleasure I experienced on the receipt of the foregoing letter; the unknown writer of which is entitled to my best acknowledgments. The motive which at first induced me to commence these periodical selections, still exists with full force on my mind; and I know of no satisfaction, equal to that which springs from a conviction of my

humble labours being useful to my fellow-citizens. Yet I am willing to confess, that the approbation of the pious and the good, is not without its charms; and however I may imagine myself to be free from the anxiety of an author, I feel that I could not without concern, consign these papers to the chilling hand of neglect. But the publication of my correspondent's friendly letter requires no apology. The subject of it is of infinite importance. I have long observed, with deep and sincere regret, the evil of which he complains. In the walks of polished society, there are daily to be found, characters whom Heaven has blessed with talents to delight and to improve mankind, tainted by the baleful influence of a specious and seductive philosophy, and treating with indifference, or rejecting with disdain, that revelation, which has filled with rapture and devotion the most exalted minds.

I regret that I cannot now furnish my readers with the eloquent extract, to which my correspondent alludes, without exceeding the limits allotted for the present number: yet, among the variety of topics which interest the generality of readers, I am willing to hope, that in some minds the impression made by this subject, may even survive a whole week. Nor am I doubtful of my correspondent's expectations being in some degree realized.

The young scholar in the school of piety, will apply with fresh vigour to his labours, with such honoured masters to direct his studies, and to animate his virtuous exertions. Fired by the example of these illustrious heroes, the christian soldier yet trembling and unconfirmed, will *put on the whole armour of God*, and like his immortal leader, march forth against his spiritual enemies, *conquering, and to conquer*. The humble believer will go on his way rejoicing, when he finds that such men as LOCKE, NEWTON, and BOYLE, have travelled in the same path before him: and he, who yet lingers on the confines of Scepticism, will hardly refuse to assent to those doctrines, which the best and the wisest of mankind have felt and acknowledged to be true.

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NO. XIII.

SUBJECT OF THE PRECEDING NUMBER CONTINUED.

EXTRACT FROM MR. ERSKINE'S SPEECH. *

" In running the mind along the long list of sincere and devout christians I cannot help lamenting

* Dr. Porteus, in his admirable Lectures on the Gospel of St. Matthew, having occasion to allude to the eloquent speech, from which this extract is taken, subjoins the following note: " To this (the declaration of Mr. Erskine, in favour of the truth of christianity) I must beg leave to add the weighty and important testimony of that most able and upright judge, lord Kenyon, who, in his charge to the Jury, on the same occasion, made this noble CONFESSION OF FAITH: ' I am fully impressed with the great truths of Religion, which, thank God, I was taught in my early years to believe; and which the hour of reflection and

that NEWTON had not lived to this day, to have had his shallowness filled up with this new flood of light. But the subject is too awful for irony. I will speak plainly and directly. NEWTON was a christian; NEWTON, whose mind burst forth from the fetters cast by nature upon our finite conceptions; NEWTON, whose science was truth, and the foundation of whose knowledge of it was philosophy: not those visionary and arrogant presumptions, which too often usurp its name; but philosophy resting upon the basis of mathematics, which like figures cannot lie; NEWTON, who carried the line and rule to the utmost barriers of creation, and explored the principles by which, no doubt, all created matter is held together and exists. But this extraordinary man, in the mighty reach of his mind, overlooked, perhaps, the errors, which a minute investigation of created things on this earth, might have taught him, of the essence of his Creator. What then shall be said of the great Mr. BOYLE, who looked into the organic structure of all matter, even to the brute, inanimated substances which the foot treads on? Such a man may be supposed to have been

inquiry, instead of creating any doubt, has fully confirmed me in'—How vain are all the idle cavils of the whole tribe of infidels, put together, when compared with such a declaration as this, "from such a man!"

equally qualified with Mr. Paine, *to look through Nature up to Nature's God:* yet the result of all his contemplation was, the most confirmed and devout belief in all which the other holds in contempt, as despicable and drivelling superstition. But this error might, perhaps, arise from a want of due attention to the foundations of human judgment, and the structure of that understanding which God has given us, for the investigation of truth. Let that question be answered by Mr. Locke, who was, to the highest pitch of devotion and adoration, a christian. Mr. Locke, whose office was to detect the errors of thinking, by going up to the fountains of thought, and to direct into the proper track of reasoning, the devious mind of man, by showing him its whole process, from the first perceptions of sense, to the last conclusions of ratiocination, putting a rein upon false opinion, by practical rules for the conduct of human judgment. But these men, were only deep thinkers, and lived in their closets, unaccustomed to the traffic of the world, and to the laws which practically regulate mankind.

Gentlemen! in the place where we now administer the justice of this great country, above a century ago, the never to be forgotten sir Matthew Hale presided, whose faith in christianity is an exalted commentary upon its truth and reason, and whose

life was a glorious example of its fruits in man; administering human justice with wisdom and purity, drawn from the pure fountain of the christian dispensation; which has been and will be, in all ages, a subject of the highest reverence and admiration."

This eloquent pleader in the cause of christianity, then pronounced an animated encomium on the no less pious than admirable author of *Paradise Lost:* after which he proceeds,

"Thus you find all that is great, or wise, or splendid, or illustrious, amongst created beings, all the minds gifted beyond ordinary nature, if not inspired by its Universal Author for the advancement and dignity of the world, though divided by distant ages and by clashing opinions distinguishing them from one another, yet joining, as it were, in one sublime chorus to celebrate the truths of christianity, and laying upon its holy altars the never fading offerings of their immortal wisdom."

I have this day presented my readers with the extract from the speech of Mr. Erskine, recommended by my correspondent in the last number of the Monitor; and I trust it will be found worthy of the praise bestowed upon it, and justly entitled to their most serious attention. The illustrious examples which this eloquent defender of christianity brings to our view,

add another link to that strong chain of evidence, which incontestably proves the Divinity of its great author.

When I reflect on the many valuable members of society, who are almost entire strangers to the sacred volumes, the truth of whose all-important contents has been attested by the greatest characters of almost every age and country, my heart fills with sorrow; and I look round for every species of argument and persuasion, to lead them, if possible, to an acquaintance with these invaluable repositories of heavenly wisdom. Nor let the cold and the phlegmatic accuse me of enthusiasm in a rash and hopeless cause. Can I gaze on the glories of the rising sun, and dwell with rapture on the countless and ever varying wonders of nature, without lamenting his melancholy state, whose eyes are closed to this bright display of beauty, and to whom all creation presents nothing but a blank? When the sounds of harmony, swell on my delighted ear, and I listen enchanted to the wild notes of the thousand songsters of the morn, can I repress the sigh of commisseration for him, whose ears the hand of heaven has sealed in perpetual silence? Cold indeed must be his heart, who, glowing with the fresh bloom, and bounding with the vigour of health, does not feel for the poor, afflicted, child of disease. Let

me, then, employ my humble talent, in leading to the sun of righteousness, him who has shut his mental eye in voluntary darkness: Let me try to charm the deaf adder by the glorious sounds and glad tidings of the gospel; and by an honest exertion of my poor abilities, let me endeavour to bring to the Physician of souls, those unhappy beings, who feel the agonies of a wounded spirit, and are wasting away under the miseries of a diseased and fallen nature.

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NO. XIV.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

TESTIMONY OF SIR WILLIAM JONES TO THE TRUTH OF REVELATION.

PURSUING the train of thought which flows naturally from the subject of the last *Monitor*, I this day select for my readers, the invaluable testimony of one of the greatest characters that ever adorned and dignified human nature.

The name of sir William Jones is dear to every lover of truth and virtue; and his memory will be held in reverence, so long as genius, and talents, and piety, maintain their influence among mankind. At an early period of life, this profound scholar deter-

mined to apply himself to the study of the evidences of christianity. This resolution, as important as it was noble and sincere, is recorded by his biographer, lord Teignmouth; and the result of a long and patient investigation, was, that firm and animated belief, which the following extracts from his writings unequivocally express:—

"I (says this great man, in his dissertation on "the gods of Greece, Italy, and Rome) I, who cannot "help believing the divinity of the Messiah, from the "undisputed antiquity, and manifest completion of "many prophecies, especially those of Isaiah, in the "only person recorded by history, to whom they are "applicable, am obliged, of course, to believe the "sanctity of the venerable books, to which that sacred "person refers, as genuine. But it is not the truth of "our national religion, as such, that I have at heart: "It is truth itself;—and if any cool, unbiassed reader "will clearly convince me, that Moses drew his nar-"rative through Egyptian conduits, from the primæ-"val fountains of Indian literature, I shall esteem him "a friend, for having weeded my mind from a capital "error, and promise to stand among the foremost, in "assisting to circulate the truth, which he has as-"certained." In a discourse, addressed to the Asiatic Society, he observes:—"Theological inquiries

" are no part of my present subject; but I cannot re-
" frain from adding, that the scriptures contain, in-
" dependently of a divine origin, more true sublimi-
" ty, more exquisite beauty, purer morality, more
" important history, and finer strains of poetry and
" eloquence, than could be collected, within the same
" compass, from all other books, that were ever com-
" posed in any age, or in any language. The two
" parts of which the scriptures consist are connected
" by a chain of compositions, which bear no resem-
" blance, in form or style, to any that can be produ-
" ced from the stores of Grecian, Indian, Persian, or
" even Arabian learning. The antiquity of those
" compositions no man doubts; and the unstrained
" application of them to events long subsequent to
" their publication, is a solid ground of belief, that
" they are genuine compositions, and consequently in-
" spired."

' On contemplating these various expressions of his faith,' says his biographer, ' we cannot wonder at the glow of piety, which breathes in the following lines:'—

" Before thy mystic altar, heav'nly truth;
" I kneel in manhood, as I knelt in youth.
" Thus let me kneel, till this dull form decay,
" And life's last shade be brighten'd by thy ray:

"Then shall my soul, now lost in clouds below,
"Soar without bound, without consuming glow."

Such were the opinions, on a subject the most awful and interesting, of this truly great and wonderful man.—A man, whom, for every valuable quality, we surely should not fear to match with the stoutest of our antagonists. In almost every solid excellence and shining accomplishment, he towers proudly above all his contemporaries. In his flight after truth, he outstrips all that have lived in our days; while the splendour of his virtues throws into the shade those minute philosophers, who vainly try to hide him from the view of an admiring world. In his arduous struggle in the cause of christianity, he has routed her fiercest foes. He has driven infidelity from its last and strongest hold: and on the ruins of the eastern temple, has erected a sublime structure for the worship of THE LIVING GOD. The testimony of such a man is, in every respect, invaluable: and he who will sit down, seriously to examine the scriptures for himself, need not fear the result of his honest inquiry, when aided by the arguments, and invigorated by the example of sir William Jones.

It may be, indeed, asserted, without the fear of contradiction, that there is not a book in the world, which has undergone so severe an examination as that which

for its excellence, we denominate THE SCRIPTURES. During the lapse of more than three thousand years, the writings of Moses have withstood all the opposition that the wit of man could bring against them. As the flood of ages rolled on, the prophets in succession marched under the banners of the Jewish lawgiver; and remain to this day, a firm phalanx, unmoved by the assaults of enemies, unhurt by the fiery darts of the wicked. At length, in the fulness of time, when the hour was come, he, to whom both the law and the prophets gave witness, appeared; and the records of the life and death of this awful personage, stand at the present moment a glorious proof of the providence of God, in guarding and preserving, as the apple of his eye, this, his brightest dispensation of goodness, his last and best gift to mankind. Against the New-Testament every effort has been tried, every engine set in motion, that malice could devise, or genius recommend, or power accomplish. The prince, the priest, and the philosopher, each in his turn, as the occasion seemed to require, and sometimes with confederated might, have spent all their force against the sacred page. But the decree of Heaven has gone forth, and shall not return. The religion of our once despised, but now glorified Redeemer, stands on the solid basis of immutable and eternal truth.—

"*The floods may come, and the rains may descend, and the winds may blow and beat against this Church of Christ; but it shall not fall; for it is founded upon a rock, and the very gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*"

THE WEEKLY MONITOR.

NO. XV.

ADVICE OF THE CELEBRATED LORD CHATHAM TO HIS NEPHEW, ON THE SUBJECT OF RELIGION.

[" We, have ventured to postpone the publication of the number of the Monitor, intended for this day's *Courier*, to enable us to lay before our readers the following letter, which we have received from a very respectable source, and which, we trust, will be found not unworthy of their attention. It contains a well-written and elegant tribute of applause to the head and heart of the gentleman, to whom we are indebted for the papers of the Monitor; and as it seems

to fall in exactly with his original design, we are convinced he will cheerfully acquiesce in our determination. We know that the good of the community is his ultimate object, and we are persuaded he will rejoice at any opportunity of contributing to its improvement; while, at the same time, it cannot fail to afford him satisfaction to find, that his labours are neither ineffectual nor disregarded; but draw forth the unsolicited approbation of men, who, like the writer of the following letter, are sincerely concerned for the honour and interests of true religion.—EDITORS."]

THE following letter displays a spirit of generous concern for the extension of truth; and as it brings into the field another illustrious champion in the cause of religion, I have ventured to republish it in this place; a liberty, for which I trust I shall be excused. I could not resist the two-fold gratification which it affords me, of enriching these essays by so valuable an acquisition, and of returning my best and sincerest acknowledgments to the author.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE COURIER.

He, who discusses with ability, and solves with clearness, our great national concerns, does the work

of a good politician; he who illustrates our civil rights, does that of a good citizen; he, who suggests improvements of human industry, performs the duty of a valuable and useful man; but he, who consecrates his pen to the cause of religion and morality, unites the praises of all, in doing the work of a good christian. Such is the praise due to your correspondent, from whose enlightened pen the public are edified by The Weekly Monitor. This writer is obviously animated more by the desire of doing good, than by a thirst for fame. Endowed with fine talents of composition; a mind fertile in thought and fraught with high sensibilities, he is, nevertheless, for the most part, content to furnish his readers with the sentiments of those great men, whom religion enlists amongst her votaries, and whose examples are fitted to bring home with force, to the minds of others, its great and important truths. It is to be hoped he will continue these benevolent labours, so well adapted to inspire our youth with reflection, to shake the confidence of the deist, to rebuke the presumption of the profligate, and to check the arrogance of the self-sufficient free-thinker. Some, it is to be hoped, may be prevailed upon to doubt the soundness of their own notions of religion, when they find themselves dissenting from

Newton, Boyle, Locke, Hale, Addison, and a multitude of others, who have fathomed the depths of natural and intellectual science, and been the lights of the world. Influenced by the power of their authority, such persons may be induced to believe with them, or at least, be stimulated by their example, to inquire into the foundations of religious truths. Least of all, can they indulge apathy on subjects, which such men have deemed worthy of the exertion of all their intellectual powers.

That the greatest men of the past ages, the most renowned for intellectual research, for personal character, and splendid eloquence, should have borne their testimony in favour of our religion, is surely no small recommendation of it.—Another star in this illustrious constellation of christian disciples, may be found in the celebrated lord Chatham. If your correspondent will pardon me for an apparent intrusion, into a plan that he is accomplishing in a manner so masterly, I will subjoin one, amongst many proofs of this fact. A series of letters have not long since been published, which that great man wrote to his nephew, Thomas Pitt, (afterwards lord Camelford,) while he was pursuing his education at Cambridge, and which his uncle was directing with all the

earnestness of parental solicitude. It is a well known fact, indeed there is intrinsic evidence, that it was never expected these letters would become public; and the sentiments may, therefore, be regarded as moulded by no sinister purpose, but as coming warm and genuine from the heart of that great man. In the first three letters, he had prescribed the collegiate studies and exercises, and enumerated the books he desired his nephew to read. In the fourth letter, he guards him against the dissipation and corruptions of the place, gives him some rules for the choice of companions, for his exterior deportment, and to prevent the adopting of crude opinions without investigation—after which he proceeds thus:—

" I come now to the part of the advice I have to offer to you, which most nearly concerns your welfare; and upon which every good and honourable purpose of your life will assuredly turn; I mean the keeping up in your heart the true sentiments of religion. If you are not right towards God, you can never be so towards man. The noblest sentiment of the human breast is here brought to the test. Is gratitude in the number of man's virtues?—If it be, the highest Benefactor demands the warmest returns of gratitude, love and praise—*Ingratum qui dixerit*

*omnia dixit.** If a man wants this virtue, where there are infinite obligations to excite and quicken it, he will be likely to want all others towards his fellow-creatures, whose utmost gifts are poor, compared to those he daily receives at the hands of his never-failing Almighty friend. "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth," is big with the deepest wisdom. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," and an upright heart, that is understanding. This is eternally true, whether the wits and rakes of Cambridge allow it or not; nay I must add, of this religious wisdom, "her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace," whatever your young gentlemen of pleasure think of sensual excesses, a tainted health, and battered constitution. Hold fast, therefore, by this sheet anchor of happiness, religion. You will often want it in the times of most danger, the storms and tempests of life. Cherish true Religion as preciously as you would fly with abhorrence and contempt from superstition and enthusiasm. The first is the perfection and glory of human nature; the two last, the depravation and disgrace of it. Remember the essence of religion is, a heart void of offence

* This sentiment is vigorously expressed in the paraphrase of Young.

"He that's ungrateful, has no fault but one:
"All other crimes may pass for virtues in him."

towards God and man; not subtle, speculative opinions; but an active, vital principle of faith. The words of a heathen were so fine that I must give them to you.—

> Compositum jus fasque animo, sanctosque recessus
> Mentis, et incoctum generoso pectus honesto" *

* This noble sentiment occurs in the second satire of Persius; and as it discovers a spirit not unworthy of a christian, I take the liberty of transcribing it from the elegant translation of Mr. Drummond.

> " To the just Gods let me present a mind,
> Which civil and religious duties bind,
> A guileless heart, which no dark secrets knows,
> But with the generous love of virtue glows."

" It is evident," says the translator, in an allusion to this satire, " that Persius had studied the writings of Plato, and "that, like that philosopher, he had conceived an exalted notion "of the divine intelligence. Whilst Idolatry lavished treasures "upon the gods which she herself had created, whilst Superstition daily immolated victims upon her bloody altars, and "whilst the capital of the world was divided between atheists "and fanatics, a heathen poet taught the sublime lesson, that a "pure heart is the most acceptable gift which man can make "to his creator."

Such of my readers as are conversant with the scriptures, will readily call to mind many passages, which confirm and illustrate the elevated philosophy of the Roman bard. The prophet Micah speaks on this subject in a strain of sublime eloquence. "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow "myself before the most high God? Shall I come before him "with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the "Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression,

"the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul. He hath showed "thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require "of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk hum- "bly with thy God." "Bring no more vain oblations;" says Isaiah, in the character of the Deity. "Incense is an abomina- "tion unto me." When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide "mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I "will not hear. Your hands are full of blood. Wash you, "make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before "mine eyes: cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judg- "ment; relieve the oppressed; judge the fatherless; plead for "the widow." A heathen moralist, delivering sentiments of religion and virtue, so congenial with the spirit of these inspired writers, may shame the disciples of modern infidelity; men, who, however they may boast of the discharge of their duty to society, would blush to be detected in an act of piety to God.

THE WEEKLY MONITOR.

NO. XVI.

ON THE GOODNESS OF THE DEITY.

The reflections which religion awakens in the mind, although of the most serious and solemn nature, are at the same time pregnant with hope, and full of the sweetest consolation. This is strictly the case, in every point of view in which the awful discoveries of revelation offer themselves to our examination. The devout contemplation of all the attributes of the Divine Being, is calculated to excite the best feelings of our nature, and to fill with a holy and elevated rapture, the heart of man. But there is one view of this sublime subject, which more than all others, creates in my breast sensations of the purest

delight. To me, it is almost exclusively the parent of joy, the nurse of hope, the inspiring spring of all spiritual exultation. Behold the varied scenery of nature. On every side the benevolence of the deity meets our delighted view. It is impossible to reason for one moment, without confessing this great and animating truth. On every page of the vast volume of creation, the characters of infinite goodness are engraved, too deep to be erased, too legible ever to be mistaken: Simplicity itself cannot err; and *he that runs may read.* As the sun in the firmament, encircled by the starry host, beams forth with unrivalled splendour, invigorating, and beautifying, and gladdening all things—so shines, amidst an infinity of excellences, transcendently bright and glorious, the GOODNESS OF THE ALMIGHTY!

To lead my readers to the contemplation of this delightful subject, I have copied from "*Bennett's Letters to a Young Lady,*" the following extract, with which I shall conclude the present number.—Fain would I believe, that the zeal and animation of this charming and eloquent writer may kindle in some favoured breast, the flame of gratitude to the greatest and best of beings, the giver of every good and perfect gift. Such a conviction would, indeed, prove a glorious reward for my humble labours, and supply

me, through all the chances and changes of life, with that peace of mind, which the world can neither give nor take away.

" If your mind (says this pious writer to his fair correspondent) is in a proper frame, every thing in you and about you will inculcate the necessity, and prompt you to the continual exercise of devotion.— You will find yourself encompassed with innumerable fears, weaknesses, wants, sorrows, diseases, wishes, hopes, under which all human creatures will be unable to assist, or give you any adequate relief; but wherever you cast your eyes, you will, at the same time, be environed with the immensity of a Being, who is possessed of all possible perfections, and who holdeth the issues of life and death, of happiness and misery, solely in his hands. The power, majesty, grandeur, and wisdom of this Being, are discernible in every part of your frame, in every function of your body, and operation of your mind; nay, in the curious and exquisite formation of every animal and insect. They are seen on a still *sublimer* scale, in the size, the distances, grandeur, and wonderful revolution of the heavenly bodies; in the beautifully variegated canopy of Heaven; in all the delicious landscapes of nature; in the pleasing succession of day and night, spring and autumn, summer and winter. In short,

winds and storms, thunder and lightning, earthquakes and volcanos; the grand, magnificent ocean, waves and comets fulfilling his word, appearing and receding at his sovereign command; flowers, blossoms, fruits, fossils, minerals, petrifactions, precipices, hills, caverns, vallies, all tell you, that their Former is immensely magnificent, that 'he doeth what he will in the armies of Heaven and amongst the inhabitants of the earth,' and that 'none can withstand the thunder of his power.'

"This God, then, is able, to gratify your wishes, and support you under all your suffering; he has wisdom enough to protect and guide you. The question then is; is he willing?—On this head, hearken to all nature, for it speaks aloud. Look through the numberless orders and gradations of animals, insects—nay, the meanest reptiles, and you will be astonished with the attention that has been lavished on them, in the contrivance of their frame, the allottment of their situation, and the provision made for their continual support. They are happy.—Shift your eye to all the inanimate creation, and you will find it a scene of harmony, of order, and beauty, and seemingly constructed for our gratification. Lovely, picturesque views delight our imagination; shrubs, and plants, and flowers, regale us with aromatic smells.

" Indeed, if you reason for a moment, why should the Almighty create at all, but to diffuse and variegate enjoyment. Inexhaustible source of happiness from all eternity, he needed not, and in fact, could not receive, an addition to his own. In himself supremely blessed, fountain of eternal majesty and splendour, adored by seraphs, surrounded by myriads of angels and archangels, what dignity could he derive from the existence or services of man, who is but a worm, or the production of ten thousand worlds? It was infinite wisdom, therefore, that sketched out the plan of universal nature, and all communicative goodness, that bade so many worlds exist and bade them to be happy. The supreme and gracious former wished to communicate some scattered rays of his glory, and his blessedness, to this extended world of matter and of life, and has therefore replenished every leaf, every drop of water, and every possibility of space with shoals of inhabitants; for—

" Scarce buds a leaf, or springs the lowest weed,
But little flocks upon his bosom feed:
No fruit our palate courts, or taste or smell;
But on its fragrant bosom nations dwell."

" Is it not then a certain conclusion, that he created you, as well as all inferior animals, for happiness? On this you may depend, as much as you can upon

the certainty of your existence, and that he is always more willing to be your protector, than you are ready to request it.

"Open the sacred book, and from beginning to end, it will confirm this opinion, and exalt your ideas of the divine perfection. 'I delight in exercising 'loving kindness (saith the Lord.)—The Lord is 'good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his 'works. If he clothe the grass in the field, which 'to day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, how 'much more shall he clothe you, O ye of little faith?' That religion is built on wrong notions, or a melancholy temper, which fills us with imaginary terrors.—All nature breathes a language of hope and mercy. And nature is the messenger of God."

THE WEEKLY MONITOR.

NO. XVII.

ON PRAYER, IN IMITATION OF CHRIST.

For the subject of this day's Monitor, I am indebted to a discourse of the late Dr. Paley, on *prayer in imitation of Christ*. There is a perspicuous and elegant simplicity in it, which is the peculiar characteristic of this excellent writer; and the concluding paragraph conveys an awful lesson which ought to sink deep into the heart of every christian. To this important subject, it was my earnest wish to draw the attention of my readers; and I knew of no better chance of success, than the republication of the following extract. May it lead them to apply in secret to that Being, who has promised to reward his servants openly, and who, though he inhabiteth eternity, has revealed himself as the hearer of prayer!

The despiser of religious truth, and he who boasts of the strength of reason and the dignity of human nature, may smile at the anxiety, which I confess to feel on this subject: but it will not be so with the humble believer in Christ.—Long had he wandered in the dark wilderness of doubt and ignorance, and he cannot forget that star of truth, which shone on his benighted path. Many a weary night has he past, in all the miseries of the mind's disease; and never will he cease to think on that Physician, who restored his soul to health, and peace, and joy.

If, among all the means of grace, there be one which, more than all others, leads the soul to God, and calls down a blessing from Heaven, it is prayer. If there be one gift of our gracious Creator, which most especially demands the liveliest gratitude of his fallen, helpless creatures, it is the spirit of prayer.—Prayer is the Christian's refuge in the time of danger; the anchor which stays him, when the waves of temptation arise. Prayer is his joy in health, in sickness his consolation. It is his strong hold, when all worldly bulwarks are laid low. It gives him the shield of faith; it girds him with truth; it covers his head with the helmet of salvation; and, in the hour of battle, supplies him with the whole armour of God.

"It is to be remarked, that a fulness of mental devotion was the spring and source of our Lord's visible piety. And this state of habit we must acquire. It consists in this:—in a habit of turning our thoughts towards God whenever they are not taken up with some particular engagement. Every man has some subject or other, to which his thoughts turn, when they are not particularly occupied. In a good christian, this subject is God, or what appertains to him. A good christian, walking in his fields, sitting in his chamber, lying upon his bed, is thinking of God. His meditations draw, of their own accord, to that object, and then his thoughts kindle up his devotions; and devotion never burns so bright or so warm, as when it is lighted up from within. The immensity, the stupendous nature of the adorable Being, who made and who supports every thing about us; his grace, his love, his condescension towards his reasonable and moral creatures; the good things which he has placed within our reach; the heavenly happiness which he has put it into our power to obtain; such reflections will not fail of generating devotion, of moving within us either prayer, or thanksgiving, or both. This is mental devotion. Perhaps the difference between a religious and an irreligious character depends more upon this mental devotion, than upon any other thing.—This

mind was in Christ; a deep, fixed and constant piety. The expressions of it we have seen in all the forms, which could bespeak correctness and sincerity; but the principle itself lay deep in his divine soul.—The expressions were occasional, more or fewer, as occasions called, or opportunities offered; but the principle was fixed and constant, uninterrupted, unremitted.

"But our Lord, whose mental piety was so unquestionable, so ardent, and so unceasing, did not, nevertheless, content himself with that. He thought fit, we find, at sundry times, to draw it forth in actual prayer, to clothe it with words, to betake himself to visible devotion, to retire to a mountain, for this express purpose; to withdraw himself a short distance from his companions; to kneel down; to pass the whole night in prayer, or in a place devoted to prayer. Let all who feel their hearts impregnated with religious fervour, remember this example:—Remember that this disposition of the heart ought to vent itself in actual prayer. Let them not either be afraid, nor ashamed, nor suffer any person, nor any thing, to keep them from this holy exercise. They will find the devout dispositions of their souls strengthened, gratified, confirmed."

After having shown in what manner, both previous to any work of importance, and subsequent to

some signal display of his divine power, our great Exemplar betook himself to prayer, Dr. Paley conducts us to the last scene of our Saviour's life, and describes his fervent devotion, at that awful period, in the following affecting and impressive words:

"We find our Lord resorting to prayer in his last extremity; and with an earnestness, I had almost said a vehemence, of devotion, proportioned to the occasion.—The terms in which the Evangelists describe our Lord's devotion in the garden of Gethsemene, the evening preceding his death, are the strongest terms that could be used. As soon as he came to the place, he bid his disciples pray. When he was at the place, he said unto them—'Pray that ye enter not into temptation.' This did not content him; this was not enough for the state and sufferings of his mind. He parted even from them. He withdrew about a stone's cast, and kneeled down. Hear how his struggle in prayer is described. Three times he came to his disciples, and returned again to prayer; thrice he kneeled down, at a distance from them, repeating the same words. Being in agony, he prayed more earnestly; drops of sweat fell from his body, as if it had been great drops of blood; yet in all this, throughout the whole scene, the constant conclusion of his prayer was, 'not my will but thine be done!' It was the

greatest occasion that ever was; and the earnestness of our Lord's prayer, the devotion of his soul, corresponded with it.—Scenes of deep distress await us all. It is in vain to expect to pass through the world, without falling into them. We have, in our Lord's example, a model for our behaviour, in the most severe and most trying of these occasions; afflicted, yet resigned; grieved and wounded, yet submissive; not insensible of our sufferings, but increasing the ardour and fervency of our prayer, in proportion to the pain and acuteness of our feelings.

"But whatever may be the fortune of our lives, one great extremity, at least, the hour of approaching death, is certainly to be passed through. What ought then to occupy us?—What can then support us?—Prayer. Prayer, with our blessed Lord himself, was a refuge from the storm; almost every word he uttered, during that tremendous scene, was prayer; prayer the most earnest, the most urgent; repeated, continued, proceeding from the recesses of his soul; private, solitary:—Prayer for deliverance; prayer for strength; above every thing, prayer for resignation."

THE WEEKLY MONITOR.

NO. XVIII.

ON A SENSE OF THE DIVINE PRESENCE, AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE CONDUCT OF MANKIND.

It has been always a subject of regret, among the thinking part of mankind, that our virtuous resolutions fail, too frequently, to produce good actions; that the best of us are quicker to percieve, than willing to perform our duty; and, I believe the admonition of our Saviour, will be found, on examination, to evince an intimate acquaintance with the human heart. "If ye know these things, happy are ye, if ye do them."

It is, indeed, a melancholy fact, to which every man's heart will bear witness, that we spend our lives in the too frequent neglect of the most obvious and important truths: and I know not a single doctrine,

which is more fatally counteracted by this pernicious habit, than that which is the foundation of all religion, the omnipresence of God.

This great truth is so consonant to the clearest deductions of reason, and the plainest declarations of scripture, that all religious sects, however they may differ in other points, agree in this. All societies confess it, and no one entertains any doubt of this attribute of the Deity, who does not at the same time, doubt or deny his existence.

And yet, how little do we suffer this awful doctrine to influence our lives and conduct! We feel ourselves surrounded by the immensity of him, "in whom we live and move and have our being;" and our hearts assure us that we are continually in his presence; yet we run our course of considerate folly, as if there daily were no ever-wakeful eye to watch us, no unerring hand to mark down what is done amiss. We follow the phantoms of pleasure, regardless of that great Being, who ceases not to call us to the pursuit of wisdom and virtue; and, whatever we may profess to believe, this is, too often, the unequivocal language of our actions: "God hath forgotten; he hideth away his face, and he will never see it."

I have been led to these reflections by the perusal of an animated passage in one of Foster's Es-

says, a work which abounds with the noblest sentiments, clothed in the most energetic language, and is marked by a vigour and originality of thought, which place the author, in my estimation, at the head of all the moral writers of the present day. To one of those unhappy persons, who has passed from youth to age, without having God in his thoughts, and is about to finish an irreligious life, as if, indeed, there were no God, he thus addresses himself:—

"*Why did you not think of him?* Did a most solemn thought of him never *once* penetrate your soul, while admitting the proposition that there is such a being? If it never did, what is reason, what is mind, what is man? If it did *once*, how could its effects stop there? How could a deep thought, on so singular and momentous a subject, fail to impose on the mind a permanent necessity of frequently recalling it; as some awful or magnificent spectacle will haunt you with a long recurrence of its image, even if the spectacle itself were seen no more?

"*Why did you not think of him?* How could you estimate so meanly your mind with all its capacities as to feel no regret that an endless series of trifles should seize, and occupy as their right, all your thoughts, and deny them both the liberty and the ambition of going on to the greatest object? How,

while called to the contemplations which absorb the spirits of heaven, could you be so patient of the task of counting the flies of a summer's day?

" *Why did you not think of him?* You knew yourself to be in the hands of some being from whose power you could not be withdrawn; was it not an equal defect of curiosity and prudence, to indulge a careless confidence that sought no acquaintance with his nature, and his dispositions, nor ever anxiously inquired what conduct should be observed towards him, and what expectations might be entertained from him? You would have been alarmed to have felt yourself in the power of a mysterious stranger of your own feeble species; but let the stranger be omnipotent, and you cared no more.

" *Why did you not think of him?* One would deem that the thought of him must, to a serious mind, come second to almost every thought. The thought of virtue would suggest the thought of both a law-giver and a rewarder; the thought of crimes, of an avenger; the thought of sorrow, of a consoler; the thought of an inscrutable mystery, of an intelligence that understands it; the thought of an ever-moving activity which prevails in the system of the universe, of a supreme agent; the thought of the human family, of a great father: the thought of all being, of a creator; the

thought of life, of a preserver; and the thought of death, of a solemn and uncontrolable disposer. By what dexterity, therefore, of irreligious caution, did you avoid precisely every track where the idea of him would have met you, or elude that idea if it came? And what must sound reason pronounce of a mind, which, in the train or millions of thoughts, has wandered to all things, under the sun, to all the permanent objects, or vanishing appearances in the creation, but never fixed its thought on the supreme reality; never approached, like Moses, to see this great sight?"

In this manner does the nervous Foster engage us to the consideration of a subject, than which it is hardly possible to conceive one of greater importance to our religious character. It brings with it motives, equally powerful to deter from evil, and to lead us to what is good.

He who is entering on the pursuit of some criminal gratification, or ready to engage in some unlawful design, let him once be fully persuaded that the Almighty sees and watches him; and, while yet lingering on the verge of ruin, let him pause for a moment, and ask himself this question, "how can I sin against God, and do this great evil in his sight?"

I do not say that such an argument is irresistible, and must inevitably conquer the evil principle;

but if this fail, I know of none that is likely to succeed. It will be in vain to look for motives of greater power: the hand of Heaven can alone arrest him in his swift progress to destruction.

To the good man the belief of the Divine presence is full of consolation.—To know that "he who sees in secret, will one day reward him openly," animates him in his struggles against the corruption of his nature; and turns his sighs of penitence into songs of joy. To feel that the God, who is all gracious and all powerful, is eternally with him, illumines the dark hour of adversity, and enables him to say with the poet,

"When ev'n at last the solemn hour shall come,
"And wing my mystic flight to future worlds,
"I cheerful will obey—I cannot go
"Where universal love smiles not around,
"Sustaining all yon orbs, and all their suns;
"From seeming evil still educing good,
"And better thence again, and better still,
"In infinite progression."

Let us, then, cultivate an habitual consideration of this serious truth. Let us never forget that when we are most alone, we are in the company of him who fills both Heaven and earth with his glory. And how can we better enkindle our pious meditations,

than by calling to mind the fine strains of David, never losing sight of that fervent prayer which concludes his song.—

" O Lord, thou hast searched me out, and known me;—thou art about my path, and about my bed, and spiest out all my ways.—Whither shall I go then from thy spirit, or whither shall I go then from thy presence? If I climb up into Heaven, thou art there; If I go down to Hell, thou art there also.—If I take the wings of the morning, and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there also shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, paradventure, the darkness shall cover me; then shall my night be turned to day: Yea, the darkness is no darkness with thee, but the night is as clear as the day; the darkness and light to thee are both alike.—Try me, O God! and seek the ground of my heart; prove me, and examine my thoughts; look well if there be any way of wickedness, in me; and lead me in the way everlasting."

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NO. XIX.

LETTER TO THE MONITOR ON THE ASSOCIATION OF THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES.

THE following letter was communicated to me by the Editors of the *Courier;* and, as the best way of showing with what pleasure I received it, I lose no time in laying it before my readers. The author has thought proper to conceal his name; but his good sense and correct principles stand clearly confessed. I hail him as a christian, and the firm friend, and able advocate of religion; and look forward, with pleasing hope, to an early resumption of his useful labours.

The subject which my correspondent has chosen will be interesting to all who are charmed with the

beauty of holiness, and love to contemplate the unrivalled excellence of the christian character.—In the various graces, which take root in the heart, and branch out in the life of the sincere christian, there is a consistency, which proves that they all proceed from the same divine origin, the Giver of every good and perfect gift.—Let no one say, that such characters exist but in the dreams of the enthusiast, and are but the visionary offspring of a heated fancy. No; such, transcendantly bright, and spotless and perfect was the founder of our religion, the great Exemplar himself: Such were the patriarchs and prophets who preceded his appearance, like heralds that announce some illustrious visitor, or the first blushes of the east, that give notice of approaching day. Such were the tent-makers and fishermen of Judea, the glorious company of apostles, and the noble army of martyrs, who shone as the lights of the world, but of whom, alas! the world was not worthy: And wherever the sound of the gospel is heard, there are numbers of the same spirit, whose whole life is one continued endeavour to do honour to their master's cause. Of themselves we, indeed, hear and see but little. They court not the public eye; and fame is too busy to follow into his retirements the meek

and unambitious christian: But the world, which knows them not, feels and rejoices in their blessed effects. "Wickedness," says an ingenious writer,* "is noisy; goodness does not strive nor cry. The "lightning and the thunder of Heaven attract uni- "versal notice by their glare and roaring. The sun "moves quietly on his course, and diffuses his bles- "sings in silence."

TO THE MONITOR.

SIR,

It is not without hesitation that I offer you a paper, when I reflect that it is to deprive you of the credit of having continued your excellent undertaking, without the assistant labours of any friend. But as your zeal is without pride, and seems directed rather to success, than singularity, in doing good, I am encouraged to believe that you will not reject any observations, which may tend to the advancement of religion and morality.

I have often thought that one of the best arguments in favour of Christianity, is the necessary concurrence of the various virtues which characterize

* Bogue, in his essay on the divine authority of the New Testament: an interesting work, and well calculated to confirm the faith of the doubtful christian.

its practice. Their mutual dependance proves that they have a common principle, from which they as naturally result, as the blended hues of the rainbow from the general source of light.

Before the doctrines of our religion had been familiarized, or their excellence confirmed to the world by practice, it was necessary to describe their many eminent qualities, that we might be enamoured of their Author, and desire to imitate his divine example. Hence we are required " to add to our faith virtue, to virtue temperance, to temperance brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness, charity;" and we are on the same account informed, " that the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance." In this injunction is represented a family group of christian virtues, which seem to result so naturally each from the other, that in embracing one we are invited to adopt all. But, beautiful as the scriptural delineation may be, it is not so interesting as the reality which is exemplified in the conduct and deportment of the sincere christian.—While he proves that more than one virtue is requisite, he convinces us that it is impossible to practise one, without the concurrence of all. If he hath " charity," it is not without " faith." If he hath " patience, patience

bringeth forth experience, experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed." Reflecting, that he was not made for himself alone, he adopts that radical principle, from which the inferior offices of philanthropy imperceptibly branch out, namely, of "*doing unto others, as he would wish them to do unto him.*"—Remembering, at the same time, the duties that he owes to himself, he is careful to improve the talents with which he has been entrusted. Impressed with the importance of an approving conscience, all his actions serve as ministers to it. He is afraid that for every duty neglected, or offence committed, there will be a note of discord to interrupt the harmony of his greetings. And, while thus vigilant in his duties to his neighbours and himself, he cannot be wanting in adoration and gratitude to his Maker.

There is a principle of attraction as well in the moral, as in the material world, by which qualities of a similar nature are allied. This principle manifestly acts upon those feelings and affections, which belong to the social character of man. It unites them in the same individual—and operating more extensively, unites individuals in the great community. Now, as many of the most important christian duties are required of man in his relative character, and as these bear an affinity both in their exercise and

result, they become the immediate objects of this attractive principle, and seldom act but in concert. This attraction extends as well to those feelings which debase, as to those which exalt his nature. For the indulgence of one passion invites another, and it is by their collective influence, that vice gains such an ascendancy in the human character. As the frailty, therefore, of our nature continually exposes us to the allurements of those passions, which seem inoffensive, and incident to humanity, we neccessarily require a coalition of virtues to enable us to resist that collective influence. Without such a shield, the struggle would be feeble, and vice easily triumphant. We are informed, that "charity covereth a multitude of sins;" and this surely induces the belief that charity is the compound of a multitude of virtues.

Another argument may be drawn from the inherent delight necessarily attendant on the performance of virtuous deeds.—He that has once experienced the conscious pleasure produced by a good action, is anxious to enjoy it again. He becomes active, in proportion as opportunities occur for the exercise of his benevolence; nay, he does not wait for their occurrence, but in the true christian spirit seeks for them.

From this alacrity in doing good, how easy is the transition to the other degrees in the scale of moral excellence.—Humility and gentleness of manners—affectionate and faithful friendship—forgiveness of injuries—sympathy and compassion for the sufferings of mankind—These have been often impressively amplified by divines, " as the things which belong to our peace." These are the virtues which procure that steady complacency of mind, which is the highest *earthly recompense of reward*, and the only true foretaste of the joys of futurity.

To these remarks, what better conclusion can be offered, than the precept contained in the following quotation from an inestimable little work:* — " O, fear the Lord, therefore, all the days of thy " life; and walk in the paths which he hath opened " before thee. Let prudence admonish thee, let " temperance restrain thee, let justice guide thy hand, " benevolence warm thy heart, and gratitude to Hea- " ven inspire thee with devotion.—These shall give " thee happiness in thy present state, and bring thee " to the mansions of eternal felicity."

* The Economy of Human Life.

THE WEEKLY MONITOR.

NO. XX.

ADVICE TO A YOUNG MAN, ON HIS ENTRANCE INTO LIFE.

NEVER did the inspired king of Israel deliver a sentence more full of the wisdom of Heaven, than when he told the young man to "*Remember his Creator in the days of his youth.*" We find this admonition in the concluding chapter of the works of Solomon. He seems to have reserved it, as a maxim of the utmost importance, and selects it as a final effort to persuade the tender minds of the young. It may be justly regarded as his dying advice, his last legacy to the rising generation. To him, who is in the sweet morning of life, it is more precious than rubies. If he would be happy, here or hereafter; if

he would grow in grace as he grows in stature, and find favour in the sight both of God and man; let him ponder the words of this wise king; let him bind them about his neck, and write them on the tablet of his heart.

"The virgin innocence of the mind," says a fine writer, "is a sacrifice, more acceptable to the "Almighty, than if we should come before him "with the cattle upon a thousand hills, and with ten "thousands of rivers of oil." Yes, my young friends! it must be so: and let it animate your noblest exertions. Most assuredly, if on this lower world of weakness and imperfection, there be one object worthy of the joy of angels, and on which the Deity himself looks down with a smile of complacency, it must be that of a young man resisting the urgent solicitations of passion, and flying from the charms of the syren pleasure; struggling to preserve the narrow path of rectitude; yielding to religion, a heart unseduced by the world, and glowing with all the generous feelings of truth and honour; and presenting both his soul and body a lovely and blameless offering, at the altar of his God.

A mournful conviction of the dangers to which youth is exposed, has directed my choice of the subject of this day's Monitor: and I lay before my

young readers, with feelings of affectionate concern, the following excellent address to a young man, from the works of a late writer.* May it restore to the path of virtue some thoughtless wanderer, and fix the seal of goodness on some youthful breast!—I cannot, I would not, conceal my anxiety, on this subject. The veteran knows the perils of the war—our fears are not for him—but who does not tremble with apprehension, when the young soldier first marches to the field? For the experienced pilot we feel no alarm: but, when the young mariner embarks, we would, if it were possible, bribe the elements in his favour, and our hearts send up to Heaven a voluntary prayer for his safety and success.

" I will suppose, says this excellent moralist, a " young man present, who has passed through the " forms of a liberal education at school; and who is just " entering on the stage of life, to act his part according " to his own judgment. I will address him, with " all the affection and sincerity of a parent, in the " following manner:

" You have violent passions implanted in you " by nature, for the accomplishment of her purpo- " ses; but conclude not, as many have done to their " ruin, that because they are violent, they are irresista-

* Knox's Essays.

" ble; the same nature which gave you passions, gave
" you also reason, and a love of order. Religion, added
" to the light of nature and the experience of mankind,
" has concurred in establishing it as an unquestionable
" truth, that the irregular or intemperate indulgence
" of the passions, is always attended with pain, in
" some mode or other, which greatly exceeds its
" pleasure.

" Your passions will be easily restrained from
" enormous excees, if you really wish, and honestly
" endeavour, to restrain them: but the greater part
" of young men study to inflame their fury, and give
" them a degree of force which they possess not in a
" state of nature. They run into temptation, and
" desire not to be delivered from evil. They know-
" ingly and willingly sacrifice to momentary gratifi-
" cations the comfort of all which should sweeten the
" remainder of life. Begin, then, with most sincere-
" ly wishing to conquer those subtle and powerful
" enemies, whom you carry in your bosom. Pray
" for Divine assistance. Avoid solitude the first mo-
" ment a loose thought insinuates itself, and hasten to
" the company of those whom you respect. Con-
" verse not on subjects which lead to impure ideas:
" have courage to decline reading immoral books,
" even when they fall into your hands. If, at a proper

"age, you form a strong attachment to a virtuous "woman, dare with the sanction of parental appro- "bation, to marry. It is better to be poor than wick- "ed. Cherish the object of your early love. Be "industrious, and trust in Providence.

"Thus will you avoid the perpetual torments "of unruly affection, and the thousand penalties of "selfish celibacy. Thus will you please God, and "your own heart, if it be a good one, and displease "none, but an ill-judging and wicked world.

"But, really, you have not so much to fear "from the violence of those affections, as from vani- "ty. The perverse ambition of arriving at the cha- "racter of a man of spirit, by vicious audacity, has "of late universally prevailed, and has ruined a great "part of the rising generation. From motives of "vanity, health and peace are sacrificed, fortunes la- "vished without credit or enjoyment, every relative "and personal duty neglected, and religion boldly set "at defiance.

"I have known many young men boasting of "misfortunes which are attended with the greatest "pain and misery, and ought to be accompanied "with shame. For more have taken pains to shine, "amidst the little circle of their vicious acquaintance, "in the character of gay libertines, than to acquire "by useful qualities, the esteem of the good. To

" be admitted into the company of those who are su-
" perior to them in fortune and condition, thousands
" plunge into debauchery without passion, into drunk-
" enness without convivial enjoyment, into gaming
" without the means or inclination for play. Old age
" rapidly advances. When vanity at length retreats
" from insult and from mortification, avarice succeeds;
" and meanness, and disease, and disgrace, and po-
" verty, and discontent, and despair, diffuse clouds
" and darkness over the evening of life.

" Have sense and resolution enough, therefore,
" to give up all pretensions to those titles of a fine fel-
" low, a rake, or whatever vulgar name the temporary
" cant of the vicious bestows on the distingushed li-
" bertine.—Preserve your principles, and be steady in
" your conduct, and though your exemplary beha-
" viour may bring upon you the insulting and ironi-
" cal appellation of a saint, a puritan, or even a me-
" thodist, persevere in rectitude. It will be in
" your power soon, not indeed to insult, but to pity.
" Have spirit and display it. But let it be that sort
" of spirit, which urges you to proceed in the path in
" which you were placed by the faithful guide of
" your infancy. Exhibit a noble superiority in da-
" ring to disregard the artful and malicious reproach-
" es of the vain, who labour to make you a convert

" to folly, in order to keep them in countenance.
" They will laugh at first, but esteem you in their
" hearts even while they laugh; and in the end they
" will revere your virtue.

" Let that generous courage, which conscious
" rectitude inspires, enable you to despise and ne-
" glect the assaults of ridicule. When all other
" modes of attack have failed, ridicule has succeeded.
" The bulwark of virtue, which stood firmly against
" the weapons of argument, has tottered on its ba-
" sis, or fallen to the ground, touched by the wand
" of magic Ridicule. In the school, in the college,
" in the world at large, it is the powerful engine
" which is used to level an exalted character. You
" will infallibly be attacked by it, if you are in many
" respects singular; and singular in many respects
" you must be, if you are eminently virtuous.

" Love truth, and dare to speak it, at all events.
" The man of the world will tell you, *you must dis-*
" *semble*—and so you must, if your objects and pur-
" suits are like his, mean and selfish. But your
" purposes are generous, and your methods of obtain-
" ing them are, therefore, undisguised. You mean
" well.—Avow your meaning, if honour requires the
" avowal, and fear nothing. You will, indeed, do
" right to wish to please; but you will be anxious to

" please the worthy only—and none but worthy ac-
" tions will effect that purpose.

" With all your good qualities unite the humili-
" ty of a christian. Be not morose. Be cautious of
" overvaluing yourself. Make allowance for the vi-
" ces and errors which you will daily see. Remem-
" ber that all have not had the benefit of instruc-
" tion; that a great part of mankind are, in effect
" orphans, turned loose into the wide world, without
" one faithful friend to give them advice; left to find
" their own way in a dark and rugged wilderness—
" with snares and quick sands, and chasms around
" them. Be candid, therefore, and among all the
" improvements of education, and refinement of man-
" ners, let the beautiful christian graces of meekness
" and benevolence shine most conspicuous. Relieve
" distress, prevent mischief, and do good wherever
" you can; but be neither ostentatious nor censorious.

" Be cheerful, and gratefully enjoy the good
" which Providence has bestowed upon you. But be
" moderate. Moderation is the law of enjoyment—all
" beyond is nominal pleasure and real pain.

" I will not multiply my precepts. Choose good
" books, and follow their direction.—Adopt religious,
" virtuous, manly principles. Fix them deeply in
" your bosom, and let them go with you, unloosened
" and unaltered, to the grave."

THE WEEKLY MONITOR.

NO. XXI.

RELIGION THE BEST PROMOTER OF A CHEERFUL DISPOSITION.

Of all the numerous calumnies, which the malice of infidelity has sent abroad to destroy the credit of our holy religion, there is not one more false and injurious, than that which represents it as the bane of cheerfulness, the destroyer of the harmless comforts of life:—That willing obedience, which springs from gratitude to a gracious benefactor, is described as a tedious and burdensome service; and the band of love which unites the christian to his honoured Master, is unjustly called a heavy and galling yoke, the sure badge of a degrading slavery, to which nothing but the fear of punishment could induce him to submit. You christians, says the unbeliever, purchase the un-

certain chance of the joys of Heaven with the endurance of positive evil on earth; and you deny yourselves the real gratification of passions implanted in you by nature, for the hope of obtaining satisfactions of a spiritual kind, at some distant period, which may never arrive.

If the charge rested here, it would be no hard matter to repel it; and we might tell the infidel, that the blind man who should deny the existence of light, would present an apt similitude of his own presumption; that he was declaiming against the conclusions of a science, with the first principles of which he was totally unacquainted; that the heart knoweth its own bitterness; and that to him the christian's hopes and fears, his joys and sorrows, are alike unknown. But this is not the extent of his accusation. He appeals to facts, which, however we may lament, we cannot deny.

It is the fate of christianity, like its great Master, to be most deeply wounded in the house of its friends: and mistaken notions of its true principles and character, have done it more injury than all the malignant attacks of infidelity. The enemy of our faith points with exaltation to some sincere, but weak and misguided disciple of Christ. "Behold him whom you represent as the heir of salvation, the highly favoured

of Heaven! He is covered with the garment of heaviness. He mingles his meat with tears, and his drink with weeping. No smile brightens his countenance. He goes mourning all his days; and that religion, which you press on my acceptance, as the balm of life, the rich cordial of a wounded heart, bows down his manhood to the earth, and if life last so long, will bring his gray hairs with sorrow to the grave."

This is, indeed, a grievous charge, and merits the serious attention of him, who, professing and believing the religion of Christ, suffers himself to fall the victim of a gloomy and melancholy temper of mind. "Oh if you knew," I would say to him, "what a deep wound you inflict in the very vitals of christianity, how would you shake off that desponding spirit, and strive against it, as you would against the sin that most easily besets you!—You love and revere your Divine Master, and I know you would, if called upon, lay down your life for his sake. Why then do you open his wounds afresh, and encourage his foes to put him to open shame?

"Why are you thus dejected? Behold, creation wears the robes of beauty!—The heavens rejoice, and the earth is glad. The sun cometh forth as a bridegroom, and rejoiceth to run his course. All nature swells the chorus of thanksgiving and praise.

Listen to the harp of David. 'Praise the Lord, oh my soul: while I live will I praise the Lord: Yea, as long as I have any being, I will sing praises unto my God!'—Why will you shut your eyes to the glorious scenes around you, and complain that your lot is cast on a dark and dreary waste? See, the hand of Providence presents the full cup of joy: why will you dash it, in disdain, untasted from your lips!—Ask your own heart: is not this rebellion to the mildest of sovereigns, obstinacy to the most indulgent of fathers, and ingratitude to your best and kindest friend?

"Follower of Jesus, why are you thus dejected? How greatly have you mistaken the nature of that dispensation, which was destined to bless all the nations of the earth?—How did the venerable Abraham rejoice at the prospect of the day of Christ!—The good patriarch saw it, with the eye of faith, and was glad. The prophets glowed with rapture, whenever Messiah was the theme. It was this which inspired the sublime Isaiah; this touched his hallowed lips with fire. 'Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem; for the Lord hath comforted his people. Sing, O heavens, for the Lord hath done it; shout, ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein; for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in

Israel.' Such were the transports of the saints of old, at the dawn of that day, which has beamed on you with meridian splendour.

"Christian! why are you thus dejected? The sorrows of life have clustered around you, and you mourn over the ashes of your departed joys. You have followed to the grave the friend of your bosom, the partner of your heart and fortune, the tender object of your early love.—Death hath finished the work of affliction. Your cup of misery is full. Yet listen to the whispers of hope. Hark! a friendly voice calls you. 'Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in me. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world.' Trust in the Lord, and be doing good. The clouds are passing over your head. A bright morn will succeed to this dark and gloomy night. The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose."

* But may it not be questioned, whether there be not some degree of infidelity at the bottom of most of that anxiety, which dishonours your profession and

* For the concluding remarks I am indebted to bishop Horne; whose charming discourse on the Blessing of a Cheerful Heart suggested the design of the present number.

poisons the sweets of life? For why do you grieve and lament that things are as they are? Why do you murmur and repine at what has happened? Why do you muse and disturb yourselves about what may happen? Is it not all for want of faith? Did you but attend to the instructions of this heavenly guide, she would teach you, that it is God who governs the world; that he governs it in wisdom and righteousness; and that, therefore, it is but reasonable you should leave the government of it to him; that he, who hath showed his love towards you in the greatest instance of all, will not withhold it in others; that he, who hath given his Son to die for you, will not deny you any thing which will contribute to your real welfare; and that you may safely cast all your care upon him, who will make all things in the end work together for good to them that trust in him. These considerations, were they but rendered habitual to your minds, and ready for constant use and application, would brighten the darkest scenes of human life, and cause solitude and despondency to fly away. Religion would then gain by its professors that credit and honour which it deserves, and the designs of heaven would be fully answered; which most undoubtedly are, that innocence and cheerfulness shall go together, and the best christian be the happiest man.

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NO. XXII.

THE PRESENT LIFE CONSIDERED AS A STATE OF PROBATION

Such of my readers, as are conversant with the writings of the elegant and perspicuous Dr. Paley, will easily recognize his masterly hand in the following essay. Some parts of the original I have been compelled reluctantly to omit; others I have compressed, and in a very few instances I have ventured to make some slight alterations. The subject is important. The arguments are close and irresistible; and the conclusions cannot fail, I think, of being highly consolatory to every pious and well-disposed mind.

Of all the various views, under which human life has been considered, there is not one which seems

so reasonable, as that which regards it as a state of probation; a state calculated for trying us; for improving us; and by these means, of preparing us for a higher and better state of existence. A state of complete enjoyment and happiness it certainly is not. The hopes, the spirits, and the inexperience of the young are apt and very willing to see it in this light. To them, life is full of entertainment; their relish is high; their expectations are unbounded. For a very few years it is possible they may go on without check or interruption; but they will be cured of this delusion. Pain and sorrows, disease and infirmity, accident and disappointment, losses and distress, will soon meet them in their acquaintance, their families, or their persons.—"The tender for another's pain, the unfeeling for his own;" all will find and feel enough, at least to convince them, that this world was not made for a scene of perpetual gayety, or uninterrupted enjoyment. Still less can we believe that the earth which we inhabit, was intended for a place of misery. Misery is in no instance the end or object of contrivance. Yet we are surrounded by contrivance and design. A human body is a cluster of contrivances. Only reflect, how many thousand things must go right, for us to be an hour at ease. A particle smaller than an atom in a sunbeam,

may, in a wrong place, be the occasion of the loss of limbs, of senses, or of life. Yet, under all this continual jeopardy, this momentary liability, danger and disorder, we are preserved. We know enough of nature to be assured, that misery, universal, irremediable, inexhaustible misery, was in the Creator's power, if he had willed it. Forasmuch, therefore, as the result is so much otherwise, we are certain that no such purpose dwelt in the Divine mind.

But since amidst so much happiness and so many contrivances *for* happiness, misery does still exist; it becomes a natural inquiry, to what end this mixture of good and evil is properly adapted? and I think the Scriptures place before us the only rational and satisfactory answer that can be given; "*That it is intended for a state of trial and probation.*" For it is capable of proof, that no other state would be suited to this purpose, and also that our present condition serves this purpose with peculiar propriety.

A state, totally incapable of misery, could not be a state of probation. The existence of a large class of virtues and vices, of almost all the social duties, depends on the existence of misery, as well as of happiness, in the world. Compassion, charity, humanity, benevolence; nor even justice, could have any place, where there were not human conditions to excite them;

objects and sufferings upon which they might operate; misery, as well as happiness, which might be affected by them. But there is another class of most important duties, which would be totally excluded. They are the severest, the sublimest, perhaps the most meritorious, of which we are capable—I mean patience and composure under distress, pain, and affliction; a steadfast keeping up of our confidence in God, and our dependence upon his final goodness, even at the time that every thing present is discouraging and adverse; and, what is no less difficult to retain, a cordial desire for the happiness and comfort of others, even then, when we are deprived of our own. The possession of this temper is almost the perfection of our nature. But it is only possessed when put to the trial; and tried at all it could not have been, in a life made up only of pleasure and gratification. Few things are easier than to perceive, to feel, to acknowledge, to extol the goodness of God, the bounty of Providence, the beauties of Nature, when all things go well; when our health, our spirits, our circumstances, conspire to fill our hearts with gladness, and our tongues with praise. This is easy: this is delightful. None but they who are sunk in sensuality, sottishness, and stupefaction, or whose understandings are dissipated by frivolous pursuits; none but the most giddy

and insensible, can be destitute of these sentiments. But this is not the trial; this is not the proof. It is in the chamber of sickness; under the stroke of affliction; amidst the pinchings of want; the groans of pain; the pressures of infirmity; in grief; in misfortune; through gloom and horror; that it will be seen, whethere we hold fast our hope, our confidence, our trust in God; whether this hope and confidence be able to produce in us resignation, acquiescence, and submission.

It may, therefore, be argued, from the general economy of things around us, that this life was meant for a state of probation; because it contains, what ought to be found in such a state, that admixture of good and evil, which fits it for its ultimate end, the production, exercise, and improvement of virtue.

It might easily be shown in what manner most of the evils of life are adjusted to this purpose, and how they are contrived to soften and alleviate themselves and one another. But I will confine myself on this occasion, to one species of suffering; to sickness, as the road which leads to the close of all probation; not so much as a preparation for death, as the trial of virtue, the most arduous, perhaps the most pleasing to Almighty God. To lift up the feeble hands, and the languid eye; to draw and turn with holy hope to our Creator, when every comfort forsakes us, and

every help fails; to feel and find in him, in his mercies, his promises, in the works of his providence, and still more in his word, and in his revelation of his designs by Jesus Christ, such rest and consolation to the soul, as to stifle our complaints, and pacify our murmurs; to beget in our hearts tranquillity and confidence, in the place of terror and consternation: and this, with simplicity and sincerity without having, or wishing, to have, one human witness to observe or know it, is such a test and trial of faith and hope, of patience and devotion, as cannot fail of being in a very high degree well-pleasing to the Author of our nature, the Guardian, the Inspector, and the Rewarder of our virtues.

But sickness also reconciles us to the thoughts, the expectation, and the approach of death; and becomes in the hands of Providence, an example of one evil being made to correct another.—To the christian, the calm and gentle approach of his dissolution has no terror. In that sacred custody, in which they that sleep in Christ, will be preserved, he sees a rest from pain and weariness, from trouble and distress: gradually withdrawn from the cares and interests of the world; more and more weaned from the pleasures of the body; and feeling the weight and pressure of its infirmities, he may be brought almost to desire, with

St. Paul, to be no longer absent from Christ; knowing, as he did, and as he assures us, that "if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens."

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NO. XXIII.

THE HAPPY MAN.

The following portrait is drawn by the masterly hand of the learned and pious bishop Hall. It abounds with vigorous and just conceptions, and disdaining the meretricious ornaments of modern refinement, speaks the language of nature and simplicity, and comes at once with full force to the heart.*

"And since happiness is the great end and aim of all our actions, the cause of all our hopes and desires;

* I have ventured to make some occasional deviations from the original, where I was apprehensive that an expression now obsolete, or a quaint peculiarity of style, might not suit the taste of the present day: and, as I have been guided solely by a desire to increase, if possible, the utility of this excellent extract, I trust I shall be excused for the liberty I have taken.

for which we rise early and sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness; let us turn our eyes from the *ignis fatuus* of passion and error, and fix them on the steady lights of reason and truth; let us be convinced, once for all, that religion can alone conduct us to the abodes of substantial bliss; that it is true wisdom to know our duty, and to perform it our only good; and, in spite of all the vain boastings of false philosophy, the faithless promises of the world; and more specious and subtle than all these, the delusions of our own hearts, let us live and die under a firm persuasion, that virtue and happiness go hand in hand, and *that there is no peace for the wicked.*

He is the happy man who hath learned to read himself more than all books, and hath so taken out this lesson that he can never forget it. He knows the world, and cares not for it: after many traverses of thought he has learned what he may trust to, and stands now equally armed for all events. He hath got the mastery at home; so that he can cross his will without a mutiny, and so please it, that he makes it not a wanton. In earthly things, he wishes no more than nature; but in things spiritual, he is ever graciously ambitious. As for his condition in life, he stands on his own feet, not needing to lean upon the great, and he can so frame his thoughts to his estate, that when he

hath least, he cannot want, because he is as free from desire, as superfluity.

This man hath seasonably broken the headstrong restiveness of prosperity, and can now manage it at pleasure. Upon him all smaller crosses light as hail-stones upon a roof; and, for the greater calamities, he takes them as tributes of life, and tokens of love; and if his ship be lost, yet is he sure his anchor is fast.

If the whole world were his, he could be no other than what he is now; no better pleased with himself, no higher in his carriage; because he knows, that contentment consists not in the things that he hath, but in the mind that values them. The powers of his resolution can either multiply or subtract at pleasure. He can make his cottage a manor, or a palace when he chooses; and his circumscribed fields, a large dominion; his stained cloth, arrass; his earth, plate; and he can see state in the attendance of one servant. For he has learned that a man's greatness or baseness is in himself; and in this he may even contest with the proud, that he thinks his own the best. But, if it hathpleased Providence to make him outwardly great, he has but to turn the other end of the glass, and make his stately manor a low cottage. In all his costly furniture he now perceives not riches, but use. He sees dross in the best metal, and earth through the best

clothes; and in all his troop of attendants, he finds himself to be his own servant.

He lives quietly at home, out of the noise of the world. He lives to enjoy himself always, and sometimes his friend; and has as full scope to his thoughts as to his eyes. He walks ever, even in the midway betwixt hopes and fears, resolved to fear nothing but God, to hope for nothing but that which he must have. He hath a wise and virtuous mind in a serviceable body, which that better part affects, as a present servant, and a future companion. He is not so engaged to any earthly thing, that they two cannot part on even terms; there is neither laughter in their shaking hands, nor in their farewell tears. He keeps ever the best company, the God of spirits, and the spirits of that God; whom he entertains with an awful familiarity, not being hindered with too much light, or with none at all. His conscience and his hand are friends and will not fall out; that divine part goes ever uprightly and freely, not stooping under the burthen of a willing sin, nor cramped with the fetters of unjust scruples. He would not, if he could, run away from himself or from God, not caring from whom he is hid, so he may look these two in the face. Censures and applauses are passengers to him, not guests: his ear is their thoroughfare, not their harbour. He

hath learned to fetch both his counsel and his sentence from his own breast. His strife is ever to redeem, and not to spend time. It is his trade to do good, and to think of it his recreation. He hath hands enough for himself and others, which are ever stretched forth for beneficence, not for need. He walks cheerfully the way that God hath chalked and never wishes it more wide or more smooth. Those very temptations, whereby he is foiled, strengthen him; he comes forth crowned, and triumphing out of the spiritual battle; and those scars that he hath, make him beautiful.

His eyes stick so fast in Heaven, that no earthly object can remove them; yea, his whole self is there before his time: and he sees with Stephen, and hears with Paul, and enjoys with Lazarus, the glories that he shall have, and takes possession before hand of his room among the saints: and these heavenly contentments have so taken him up, that now he looks down upon the earth, as the region of his sorrow and banishment: yet, rejoicing more in hope than troubled with the sense of evil, he holds it no great matter to live, and his greatest business to die: and is so well acquainted with his last guest, that he fears no unkindness from him; making no other of dying, than of walking home when he is abroad, or of going to bed when he is weary of the day. He is well provided for both

worlds, and is sure of peace here, of glory hereafter; and therefore hath a light heart, and a cheerful face. All his fellow creatures rejoice to serve him; his betters, the angels, love to observe him; God himself takes pleasure to converse with him; and hath sainted him, before his death; and in his death hath crowned him."

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NO. XXIV.

VICE THE CHIEF CAUSE OF INFIDELITY.

It is a melancholy fact, that of those, whose lot a kind Providence has cast in a christian land, there are still so many who reject the divine claims of the religion of Christ. Day after day, and year after year, the glad tidings of the gospel are sounded in their ears, and they live in sight, as it were of the very altar of God: But they are deaf to the voice of the charmer. They see no beauty in the temple. They will not enter those courts, in which their brethren worship; and they withdraw themselves from his protection, in whom their fathers trusted, and were not deceived.

This affords matter for many a mournful reflection, and fills with deep regret the heart of the sincere christian. He feels, within himself, the efficacy of divine truth; and he sighs to find, that so many exclude themselves from those hopes, which confirm his faith, and give him a foretaste of Heaven. The sun of righteousness, like the glorious orb of day, shines alike on the just and the unjust; and he mourns over their wretched folly, who hide themselves from its cheering beams.

But, how are we to account for this dangerous error? Whence comes it to pass, that the sacred truths of the gospel are still rejected by many, who would not willingly resign their pretensions to good sense and impartiality? It cannot be for want of evidence: The greatest masters of reason have examined them with the most patient attention, and have confessed their origin to be divine. Are they too simple and contracted for the philosopher of this enlightened age?—Yet to the sublime genius of Milton they spread an ample field for his boldest flights; and Newton found them more than equal to the capacities of his mighty mind. And, surely, they cannot be accused of wanting either interest or importance. Can that be uninteresting, which brings life and immortality to light? Can that be unimportant, on which eternal happiness or misery depends?

Where then shall we look for the cause of this fatal delusion? Listen to the voice of truth itself, *men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.* Here lies the root of this tree of death; the bitter source of infidelity is here. Christianity is too pure for the unhallowed touch of vice. It holds no parley with sin. It claims an entire and unconditional surrender; and he who bears the name of Christ, must either depart from iniquity, or give up his profession. He cannot serve two masters.

The late bishop of Loudon, in his admirable lectures on the gospel of St. Matthew, has a noble passage on this subject, which is so greatly superior to any thing I could offer, that I think I cannot do better, than present it to my readers for the conclusion of this day's paper.

"Here then," says this pious and venerable prelate, speaking of John the Baptist, "we have a person who appears to have been sent into the world, on purpose to be the precursor of our Lord; to prepare the way for Him and his religion, here called the kingdom of Heaven; and as the prophet expresses it, *to make his paths straight.* This is a plain allusion to the custom that prevailed in the eastern countries, of sending messengers and pioneers, to make the ways level and straight, before the kings and prin-

ces, and other great men, when they passed through the country with large retinues, and with great pomp and magnificence. They literally lowered mountains; they raised valleys; cut down woods; they removed all obstacles; they cleared away all roughness, and inequalities, and made every thing smooth, and plain, and commodious, for the great personage whom they preceded.

" In the same manner was John the Baptist, in a spiritual sense, to go before the Lord, before the Saviour of the world, to prepare his way, to make his paths straight; to remove out of the minds of men every thing that opposed itself to the admission of divine truth; all prejudice, blindness, pride, obstinacy, selfconceit, vanity, and vain philosophy; but, above all, to subdue and regulate those depraved affections, appetites, passions, and inveterate habits of wickedness, which are the grand obstacles to conversion, and the reception of the word of God.

" This illustrious preacher addressed himself, *in the first instance*, not to the *understanding*, but to the *heart*. He did not attempt to convince his hearers, but to reform them. He did not say to them, " go and study the prophets, examine with care the pretensions of him whom I announce, and weigh accurately all the evidences of his divine mission." He

well knew how all this would end, in the then corrupt state of their minds.

His exhortation was, therefore, *Repent ye, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand.* Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance. Till you have done this, till you have purified your hearts, and abandoned your sins, my baptism will be of no use to you, and all the reasoning in the world will have no effect upon you.

This is the preparation that he required, and thus it is that we must also prepare men for the reception of Divine truth.— We must first reform, and then convince them. It is not, in general, the want of evidence, but the want of virtue, that makes men infidels. Let them cease to be wicked, and they will soon cease to be unbelievers. "It is with the heart," says St. Paul, (not with the head) "that man believeth unto righteousness." Correct the heart, and all will go right. Unless the soil is good, all the seed you cast upon it will be wasted in vain. In the parable of the sower we find that the only seed which came to perfection, was that which fell on good ground—on an honest and good heart. This is the first and most essential requisite to belief. Unbelievers complain of the mysteries of Revelation, but we have the highest authority for saying that, in general, the only mystery which prevents them from receiving it, is the mystery of iniquity.

We hear, indeed, a great deal of the good nature, the benevolence, the generosity, the humanity, the honour, and the other innumerable good qualities, of those that reject the gospel. They may possibly possess some ostentatious and popular virtues, and keep clear from flagrant and disreputable vices. But, whether some gross depravity, some inveterate prejudice; or some leaven of vanity and selfconceit, does not commonly lurk in their hearts, and influence both their opinions, and their practices, they who have an extensive acquaintance with the writings and the conduct of that class of men, will find no difficulty in deciding. However, if this were the decision of man only, the justice of it might be controverted, and the competency of the judge denied. It might be said that it is unbecoming and presumptuous in any human being to pass severe censures on large bodies of men, and that without being able to look into the heart of man, it is impossible to form a right judgment of his moral character. This we do not deny—but, if he who actually has that power of looking into the heart of man, if he who is perfectly well acquainted with human nature, and all the various characters of men, if he has declared that "men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil," who will controvert the truth of that decision? On this authority, then, we may se-

curely rely, and may rest assured, that whatever pretences may be set up for rejecting Revelation, the grand obstacles to it are indolence, indifference, vice, passion, prejudice, selfconceit, pride, vanity, love of singularity, a disdain to think with the vulgar, and an ambition to be considered as superior to the rest of mankind, in genius, penetration, and discernment. It is by removing these impediments, in the first place, that we must prepare men, as St. John did, for embracing the religion of Christ. These, to make use of prophetic language, are the mountains that must be made low; these the crooked paths that must be made straight; these the rough places that must be made plain. Then all difficulties will be removed, and there will be a high way for our God. Then there will be a smooth and easy approach for the gospel to the understanding, as well as to the heart; there will be nothing to oppose its conquest over the soul. *The glory of the Lord shall be fully revealed, and all flesh shall see it.*"

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NO. XXV.

ON THE PACIFIC SPIRIT OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION, AS IT IS ENFORCED BY THE COMMANDS, AND EXEMPLIFIED IN THE LIFE OF ITS DIVINE FOUNDER.

EVERY person, who is the least conversant with the scriptures, must have observed how remarkably a mild and pacific spirit runs through every part of the gospel dispensation. You cannot open the sacred volume but it meets your eye in every page. Hearken to the voice of prophecy—"The wolf shall dwell "with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with "the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the "fatling together; and a little child shall lead them." In such peaceful terms does the sublime Isaiah describe the future kingdom of the Messiah: and when he wishes to fill our minds with the awful dignity of

his person, having pointed him out as "Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father," he closes the climax, and gives the finishing touch to the picture, by announcing him to a miserable and restless world, as "the Prince of Peace."

The spirit of peace is, indeed, the genius of christianity. On earth we feel the happy effects of this glorious truth; and the glad tidings of this great joy have been proclaimed, by the tongue of angels, from Heaven. As, at the hour of creation, "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy;" so, at the birth of the great Restorer of mankind, the heavenly host resumed the sacred song. Devotion and charity, praise and benevolence, furnished the delightful theme: and while the sublime chorus of "*Glory to God in the highest*," filled the midnight air, the shepherds listened, in raptures, to this divine, concluding strain—"*On earth peace and good will towards men.*"

To lead my readers to admire this beauty of holiness, and to strive for the attainment of this truly christian spirit, I have selected the following passage from a celebrated English author.* If it tend to allay, even in one breast, the heat of some malignant pas-

* Porteus' Sermons.

sion; to infuse, in its room, some portion of this heavenly disposition, and to fan the pure flame of benevolence and brotherly love; grateful shall I feel to that Being, who guided my trembling hand, and blessed my humble effort. The recollection will gild with joy my latest hour.—*I shall, indeed, have had my reward.*

"That benevolence of disposition, and gentleness of behaviour, which our Saviour so constantly, and so warmly recommended, both by his doctrine and his example, were entirely calculated to promote the peace and harmony of mankind, and to knit them together in one common bond of love and affection. If ever peace was made visible in outward form, it was in the person of our blessed Lord. His whole life and conversation were one uniform representation of it, insomuch that it might, even in this sense, be affirmed of him, that "of his peace there was no end." It has often been remarked that he came into the world in a time of profound and almost universal peace—and his birth was first announced, by declarations of peace and good will, to shepherds, men, generally speaking, of a most quiet and inoffensive disposition and behaviour. The years of his childhood were passed in a meek and dutiful subjection to his earthly parents; and after he came into public life, he showed the same peaceable submission to all his other

lawful superiors. The persons whom he chose to be the companions and the witnesses of his ministry, were of the lowest station, and the humblest tempers. The first miracle he worked, was with a design to promote good humour and good will among men; and all of them tended to improve the peaceful enjoyment of life. Yet, benevolent as the design of these and all his other actions was, he endeavoured to do them all in such a manner, at such times, and in such places, as to give no offence to any one; to excite no envy, jealousy, or unjust suspicions. He had, at the same time, to struggle with the prejudices, the mistakes, and misconstructions of his friends, and the inveterate rancour of his enemies; but yet he never suffered either the one or the other to disturb the composure of his mind. He bore all the unmerited insults and injuries of his adversaries with more patience than his followers could see them, and was almost the only person that was not provoked with the treatment he received. The same love of peace attended him to the last. The sword that was drawn in his defence he ordered to be sheathed; and healed the wound it had inflicted. Although, " if he had prayed to his father, he would " have sent him twelve legions of angels;" yet he suffered himself to be " led like a lamb to the slaughter; " and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he " opened not his mouth."

"As he lived so he also taught; for he spoke peace to his people. The main purport of his discourses was, to banish from the minds of men all those malignant and turbulent passions, which fill the world with disorder and misery, and to introduce in their room, every thing that tends to turn away wrath, to soften resentment, and to cherish peace; a meek and inoffensive deportment, a patient resignation under injuries and affronts, a compassionate tenderness and fellow-feeling for the miseries of others, and a benevolence as extensive as the whole creation of God. If ever he entered a house, he saluted it with peace. If the penitent and contrite sinner fell down and begged mercy at his feet, he bid him go in peace and sin no more. He was continually "ex- "horting his disciples to be at peace one with anoth- "er, to love their very enemies, to bless those that "cursed them, to do good to those that hated them, "and to pray for those that despitefully used and per- "secuted them."

If you ask what return God expects for the gift of his son, for sending into the world this glorious prince of peace, let the apostle answer you: "If God so loved us, we ought also to love one an- "other." An extensive, an active benevolence, is

the tribute he demands from you; and when he makes you happy, the condition is no harder than this, that you should make others so.—Let, then, your thankfulness be expressed in that best and most forcible of all languages, better as St. Paul says, than the tongue of men and angels, Charity! Let it prompt you to every act of kindness and humanity towards your neighbour. In this there can be no dissimulation or disguise. Sacrifices may be offered by impure hands, and praises by dissembling and unmeaning lips. But he who relieves the indigent, instructs the ignorant, comforts the afflicted, protects the oppressed, conceals the faults he sees, and forgives the injuries he feels, affords a most convincing proof of his sincerity, an incontestible evidence of his gratitude to his heavenly benefactor. Put then your abilities upon the stretch, to do all the good you can to all men. But, in a more especial manner, since it was one of the chief ends of Christ's mission to bring peace upon earth, let it be your great ambition to co-operate with him, as far as you are able in this great design; let it be your constant study and delight to tread in the steps of your blessed master, and to contribute every thing in your power towards completing that great and god-like work of giving peace to man. "Let

"all bitterness, and wrath, and clamour, and evil
"speaking, be put away from among you, with all
"malice, and be ye kind one to another, tender heart-
"ed, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's
"sake, hath forgiven you."

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NO. XXVI.

ON PROGRESSIVE VIRTUE, AND SOME HINTS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF THE RELIGIOUS CHARACTER.

In a former paper, I laid before my readers some arguments to prove that this life is a state of probation; and to my mind, there is no truth more important in its consequences, or more firmly established by the concurring voice of Reason and of Revelation. Let us, then, study how we may best acquit ourselves in this hour of trial. We are placed here, by divine providence, for great and noble purposes; let us strive to forward the designs of our Creator, and accomplish the end of our being. We are but on the threshold of life; let us prepare to enter the great temple of immortality that opens before us. We are children,

in the first stage of being; let us labour to acquire the rudiments of holiness and virtue, that shall crown and bless us through an existence that will never end. The shadowy scenes of time will pass away before the awful realities of eternity; let us take care how we fill those characters on earth, which we are destined to perform, on an immortal theatre, and in the presence of angels, in another world.

There is no description of persons to which this admonition does not extend. "Add to your faith, "virtue, and to virtue, temperance; and to temperance, "brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, chari-"ty." Little does he know of his own heart, who does not feel its weakness, its depravity, and consequent want of amendment. What, therefore, we say to one, we say to all. Labour to grow in grace. "Go on from strength to strength. Forgetting "those things that are behind, and looking forward "to those things that are before, press towards the "mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in "Christ Jesus."

You then, who are in earnest in your endeavours after true holiness, who desire to be doers and not hearers only, of the word of God, begin at once, and persevere in the great work of *improvement*. It is essential to your character, and the surest pledge of

your sincerity. True religion does not stop; it goes on; it mounts, higher and higher; it presses forward; it is never satisfied; and its ambition is as boundless as that immortality to which is aspires. If you are not growing better and better, be assured you will soon grow worse. Either the good, or the evil principle, must increase. The enemies of your peace neither slumber nor sleep. If you pause, you are undone; and when you cease from fighting, you sound the prelude of your defeat.

Examine your life and conduct. You are, perhaps, unstained by any flagrant vice; but are there no omissions of duty, no minor failings, of which your conscience accuses you? These failings must be corrected; these omissions must be repaired.

You are a husband, a father, a brother, or a friend; and you fill these respective characters with honour to yourself, and advantages to all your connexions: but, review your past life; has no instance occurred, in which you might have done more than you have done to serve them? Cannot you do more than you are now doing? Go on then, like Joshua of old; you have conquered much; *but there yet remaineth much land to be possessed.*

Examine your heart, and see whither your affections tend. Are your seasons of retirement more fre-

quent, your meditations more heavenly, your devotions more sincere? Are you more than ever on your guard against the attack of your spiritual enemy, the darling sin that most easily besets you? More vigorous than ever in your resistance, more willing to tear out a right eye, or cut off a right hand, when your innocence and integrity are at stake? Is your temper more and more conformed to the example of Christ? Are you more gentle and easy to be entreated, less subject to the sallies of passion, more kindly affectioned, and striving more and more, to live peaceably with all men? Here is an ample field for improvement. "Here there is business for the best; there is enough to be done for all."*

These are the labours of a christian; nor are there wanting the most powerful motives to encourage him in his arduous task. He knows it to be his duty, and *that* alone is sufficient to inspire him with a courageous and persevering spirit. He is charmed with the beauty of such a progress in goodness; and this lightens the heaviest load, and smooths the roughest path. He is certain of success. He who is Truth itself, has told him, that his labours shall not be in

* Paley's Discourses. One of which, suggested some of the reflections contained in this paper.

vain; and this assurance has power to overcome all difficulties, to cheer the darkest hour of adversity, to break the bands of sin, and finally, to triumph over death itself.—These are sweet consolations, sufficient to strengthen the feeblest knees, and to warm the coldest heart: but, when in addition to all these, the christian is assured, that there are no limits to the improvements which he is labouring to attain; that the progress he has so happily begun, shall never end: he is filled with emotions of wonder and delight, and goes on his way rejoicing. "That Cherubim," he cries, (to use the words of an inimitable writer*) "who "now appears as a God to a human soul, knows ve- "ry well, that the period will come about in eternity, "when the human soul shall be as perfect as he "himself now is: nay, when she shall look down up- "on that degree of perfection, as much as she now "falls short of it. With what astonishment and ve- "neration may we look into our souls, where there "are such hidden stores of virtue and knowledge, "such inexhaustible sources of perfection!—We "know not yet what we shall be, nor will it ever "enter into the heart of man to conceive the glory "that will be always in reserve for him. The soul,

* Addison, Spectator No. 111

" considered with respect to its Creator, is like one of " those mathematical lines, that may draw nearer to " another for all eternity, without a possibility of " touching it. And can there be a thought so trans- " porting, as to consider ourselves in these perpetu- " al approaches to Him, who is not only the standard " of perfection, but of happiness!"

Such are the bright prospects, which open to the eye of faith, and gladden the heart of the humble christian. Go, ye, *who yet halt between two opinions*, compare them with the cold speculations of the sceptic, and the vague and gloomy fancies of a comfortless and unsettled philosophy. The decision you are required to make is, indeed, most important— " *choose this day, whom ye will serve; but, as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*"

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NO. XXVII.

ON HUMILITY, AS INDISPENSABLE TO THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER; AND THE FOLLY AND GUILT OF PRIDE.

HUMILITY has been justly considered as the brightest ornament and jewel of christianity, the peculiar grace that distinguishes it from all the religions, that ever claimed the acceptance of mankind: And if we justly appreciate the advantages of this virtue, in improving the heart of him who possesses it, and the condition of all who are within the reach of its influence; if we consider how it affects us in all the changes of life; how moderate it renders us in prosperity, how patient in adversity, how contented in every state,

how it reduces our vain expectations, checks the ardour of pursuit, and makes us wisely temperate in enjoyment; in short, how it rectifies our erroneous opinions of God, of the world, and of ourselves; if these things, I say, are duly estimated, we shall find abundant cause to confess, that in learning "of Him "who was meek and lowly of heart, we shall surely "find rest unto our souls;" that Heaven alone could have propounded such a lesson of wisdom; that the teacher of humility is the prophet of God.

Christian! would you see a perfect pattern of humility? Examine the life and doctrines of your Lord. He was born in a mean and low condition, of a people in servitude, the scorn of the surrounding nations, and of a tribe of that people, whom even the Jews themselves despised. He was the reputed son of a poor mechanic; his cradle was a manger; his intimate friends and associates were illiterate fishermen; and often he had not where to lay his head. When he placed a little child in the midst of his ambitious followers, when he girded himself with a towel, and washed his disciples' feet; in every action and discourse of this divine Teacher, he gave the world a matchless example of humility, to prostrate the pride and vain imaginations of man at the footstool of his throne.

Well did he know the human heart, who thus laid his axe to the root of the tree. For if we examine ourselves, we shall find, that there is no passion more deeply fixed, or more productive of the bitter fruits of misery, than pride. We hear it in the first lispings, and trace it in the restless aspirings of a child. It grows with us, from youth to manhood; it clings to us as we go down the hill of life; and the funeral pomp, mocking the unconscious dead, tells us that it descends with us into the grave. Yet, if we look within us, and around us, and see how helpless, how dependant we are, we must confess that "pride was not made for man."

"Are you proud of riches," says an old English divine*—"Riches cannot alter the nature of things: they cannot make a man worthy that is worthless in himself: they may teach a servile world to speak a language foreign to their hearts; but, where a largeness of soul is wanting, they can never procure an affectionate esteem, grateful sentiments, and an undissembled love; for these form the willing tribute of a generous heart to merit only. Do you value yourselves upon your power?—No! what is remarked by somebody or other is a great truth. 'There is no

* Jeremiah Seed.

good in power but the power of doing good.' Are you then proud of your worldly prudence?—Alas! those who are acquainted with history, know how often the best laid designs have proved abortive. Human policy must be uncertain, because man, who is the subject of it, is so uncertain, wavering, and inconstant; and there can be no fixed and stated maxims to please and manage so changeable and inconsistent a creature. But we may, by certain and unchanging rules, gain the love of that Being, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning: That only is the true prudence, which strives to please Him, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

" Are you proud of your distinguished virtue? The moment that you are proud of being virtuous, you cease to be so. The more truly virtuous any man is, the more modest and unpretending he must be.—If a child could read those foolish, vain, and wicked imaginations, which the best of us sometimes indulge, we should be ashamed to look him in the face: And yet, we do not sometimes stifle them immediately, though we know that He, whose tremendous Majesty fills the whole compass of heaven and earth, cannot but be privy to them, and discern the secret medltations of our hearts. He who thinks

he has no weakness to subdue, either wholly or in part; no virtuous habits to acquire, or at least, to improve and perfect; he, who in short, thinks himself quite good enough, proves by the very thought, that he is not so. Then our salvation is most in danger, when we dismiss all apprehensions about it.

" But, if human virtue affords no just grounds for pride, much less does human knowledge; which bears no proportion to our ignorance. The greatest and the least objects equally baffle our inquiries. Too great and disproportioned an object embarrasses and oversets the understanding; too little a one eludes and escapes it. It is God alone, whose almighty power nothing is so great that it cannot encumber; whose infinite wisdom, nothing is so little that it cannot escape. True knowledge is one of the strongest fences against pride. The ingenious will confess the weakness of their reason, and the presumptuous betray it by being so. Wise men acknowledge their entire ignorance of many things, and their imperfect knowledge of all the rest; while the ignorant are peremptory and positive in matters quite above their sphere—and, like some creatures, are the bolder for being blind.

"But, you value yourselves, perhaps, on the strength of your genius, and the brilliancy of your parts. Alas!

the strength of the passions, and the quickness of the appetites, generally keep pace with the brightness of the imagination. And hence we find, that those who have inculcated the most excellent morality in their writings, have sometimes broke through them all in their practice. How vain, then, are all our boasted possessions!—Even reason itself hangs on a precarious tenure: and something, with a human shape and voice, has often survived every thing human besides! The brain, by too great quickness and stretch of the thought, like a chariot wheel, by the rapidity of its motion, takes fire. The thin partitions, which divided madness, are broken down. The most penetrating and sparkling genius borders upon, and sometimes more than borders upon, downright frenzy. They show us even then, in their lucid intervals, the traces of what they have been, like the monuments of old Rome, majestic even in its ruins.

" Of what, then, O man, hast thou cause to be proud?—Dost thou value thyself on popular applause and a great name?—Think how many that have made a distinguished figure in the world, are dead and unregarded, as if they had never been; their deaths unlamented, their vacancy filled up, their persons missed no more than a drop of water, when taken from the vast ocean. O, virtue! thou art the only

good! when this solemn pageantry of earthly grandeur shall be no more; when all distinctions, but moral and religious, shall vanish; when this earth shall be dissolved; when the moon shall be no more a light by night, nor the sun by day; thou shalt still survive, thy votary's immortal friend; thou shalt then appear, like the great Author, in perfect beauty; thy lustre undiminished, and thy glory unperishable!"

"If we need any new incentives, (says the excellent Jeremy Taylor) to the practice of humility, I can say no more, than that humility is truth, and pride is a lye: the one glorifies God, the other dishonours him. Humility makes men like angels, pride makes angels to become devils. Pride is folly, humility is the temper of a holy spirit, and excellent wisdom——Humility is the way to glory; pride, to ruin and confusion: God loves one, and Satan solicits the cause of the other."

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NO. XXVIII.

PROMULGATION OF THE GOSPEL IN THE EAST, AND THE CONVERSION OF TWO MAHOMETANS OF DISTINCTION TO THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

I THIS day lay before my readers, a narrative of some well authenticated facts, which cannot fail to interest all who have at heart the good of mankind, and the honour of our holy religion. It is extracted from a discourse, entitled *The Star in the East*, delivered by Dr. Buchanan, to the missionary society in Bristol. The author held for many years a respectable situation in the college of fort William, in Bengal. He has lately returned to England, and has communicated to the world, in the discourse alluded

to, the collected fruits of his own observation, and the result of his unwearied labours in the cause of christianity. The conversion to the despised doctrine of the Cross, of the two Mahometans, whom this pious and learned writer has thus introduced to our acquaintance, is an event that confesses the hand of God, and will excite the wonder and gratitude of every true disciple of Christ. One of these intrepid heroes has already fought the good fight, and finished his course. He has sealed the truth of his testimony with his blood, and is added to the long list of illustrious martyrs, who swell the triumph of our ascended Lord. The other is actively employed in communicating to others, some portion of the blessings he has received. He has commenced a translation of the scriptures into the Persian language, and in an eloquent and argumentative work, written in the common dialect of Arabia, has sounded the tidings of the Gospel in the ears of his countrymen. He is esteemed a profound mathematician and logician; and those who are personally acquainted with him, speak of him in terms of affection and admiration. The zeal and ardour of his character remind us of St. Paul. Sabat, with the bible, and the Koran before him, earnest in the search of truth, may put to the blush the selfsufficient infidel,

who rejects, without examination, those sacred records, which the wisest men of every age and country, have embraced as the oracles of God. Sabat, dismissing with his forgiveness, and loading with presents, the brother who had held a dagger to his breast, shines like another Joseph, and presents an object equally worthy of the best exertions of the poet, the painter, and the historian.

How wonderful are the ways of the Almighty. "A light hath appeared in Arabia, and hath dawned, "as it were, on the temple of Mecca itself." The sceptic may struggle against conviction, and the deist shut his eyes to this new display of the mighty power of truth. The proud philosopher may ascribe this work to prejudice, to credulity, to the influence of passion, to chance, to enthusiasm, to any thing but to the hand of God, the great cause of all: but, "in vain do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing." The humble christian sees, in the whole transaction, the spreading glory of the Redeemer's kingdom: convinced that not one jot or tittle of the promise shall fail; "that the heathen shall be given "for the inheritance of the Messiah, and the utmost "parts of the earth for his possession."

"Abdallah and Sabat were intimate friends, and being young men of family in Arabia, agreed to tra-

vel together, and to visit foreign countries. They were both zealous Mahometans. Sabat is son of Ibraham Sabat, a noble family of the line of Beni Sabat, who trace their pedigree to Mahomet. The two friends left Arabia, after paying their adorations at the tomb of their prophet at Mecca, and travelled through Persia, and thence to Cabul. Abdallah was appointed to an office of state under Zemaun Shah, king of Cabul; and Sabat left him there, and proceeded on a tour through Tartary.

" While Abdallah remained at Cabul, he was converted to the christian faith by the perusal of a bible (as is supposed) belonging to a christian from Armenia, then residing at Cabul. In the Mahometan states, it is death for a man of rank to become a christian. Abdallah endeavoured for a time to conceal his conversion, but finding it no longer possible he determined to flee to some of the christian churches near the Caspian Sea. He accordingly left Cabul in disguise, and had gained the great city of Buchara, in Tartary, when he was met in the streets of that city by his friend Sabat, who immediately recognized him. Sabat had heard of his conversion and flight, and was filled with indignation at his conduct. Abdallah knew his danger, and threw himself at the feet

of Sabat. He confessed that he was a christian, and implored him by the sacred tie of their former friendship, to let him escape with his life.—'But sir,' said Sabat, when relating the story himself, '*I had no* '*pity*. I caused my servants to seize him, and I ' delivered him up to Morad Shah, king of Buchara. ' He was sentenced to die, and a herald went through ' the city of Buchara, announcing the time of his exe- ' cution. An immense multitude attended, and the ' chief men of the city. I also went and stood near ' to Abdallah. He was offered his life, if he would ' abjure Christ, the executioner standing by him ' with his sword in his hand. ' No,' said he, (as if ' the proposition were impossible to be complied ' with:) ' I cannot abjure Christ.' Then one of ' his hands was cut off at the wrist. He stood ' firm, his arm hanging by his side with but little ' motion. A physician, by desire of the king, of- ' fered to heal the wound, if he would recant. He ' made no answer but looked up steadfastly towards ' Heaven, like Stephen the first martyr, his eyes ' streaming with tears. He did not look with anger ' towards *me*. He looked at me, but it was benignly, ' and with the countenance of forgiveness. His ' other hand was then cut off. But, sir, (said Sabat, ' in his imperfect English,) he never *changed*, he ne-

'ver *changed*. And when he bowed his head to 'receive the blow of death, all Buchara seemed to say, 'What new thing is this.'

"Sabat had indulged the hope that Abdallah would have recanted when he was offered his life; but when he saw that his friend was dead, he resigned himself to grief and remorse. He travelled from place to place, seeking rest, and finding none. At last he thought that he would visit India. He accordingly came to Madras about five years ago. Soon after his arrival he was appointed by the English government a mufti, or expounder of Mahometan law; his great learning, and respectable station in his own country, rendering him eminently qualified for that office. And now the period of his own conversion drew near. While he was at Visagapatam, in the northern Circars, extending his professional duties, Providence brought in his way a New Testament, in Arabic. He read it with deep thought, the Koran lying before him. He compared them together, and at length the truth of the word of God fell on his mind, as he expressed it, like a flood of light. Soon afterwards he proceeded to Madras, a journey of three hundred miles, to seek for christian baptism; and having made a public confession of his faith, he was bapti-

zed by the rev. Dr. Kerr, in the English church at that place; by the name of Nathaniel, in the twenty-seventh year of his age.

" When his family in Arabia had heard that he had followed the example of Abdallah, and become a christian, they despatched his brother to India (a voyage of two months) to assassinate him. While Sabat was sitting in his house at Visagapatam, his brother presented himself in the disguise of a faqueer, or beggar; having a dagger concealed under his mantle. He rushed on Sabat, and wounded him. But Sabat seized his arm, and his servant came to his assistance. He then recognized his brother. The assassin would have become the victim of public justice, but Sabat interceded for his brother, and sent him home in peace with letters and presents, to his mother's house in Arabia.

" And these, my brethren, are the instances I wished to lay before you, of the divine power of the christian religion recently exemplified in the east. The convertion of Abdallah and Sabat seems to have been as evidently produced by the spirit of God, as any conversion in the primitive church. Other instances have occurred in Arabia of a similar kind, and on the very borders of Palestine itself. These are like the solitary no-

tices which, in other nations, have announced the approach of general illumination. John Huss, and Jerome of Prague, were not, perhaps, more talked of in Europe, than Abdallah and Sabat are, at this day, in Bucharia and Arabia."

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NO. XXIX.

ON THE FOLLY AND MISERY OF AN OVER ANXIOUS DISPOSITION, AND THE HAPPINESS OF AN HABITUAL TRUST IN GOD.

"Take therefore, no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself; sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."*

It might be reasonably expected of a religion, laying claim to a divine origin, that its effects would be an increase and diffusion of all that is intrinsically good, suited to the wants of a fallen creature, and worthy of

* "The Scriptures suppose all men to have some occu-
"pation, and to be labouring in it, that the state of the world
"may be upholden. They tell us, in the old Testament 'that
"the hand of the diligent maketh rich,' and in the New, that

the benevolence of its Almighty Author. And such, with respect to Christianity, is the fact. Every precept of the Gospel has a direct tendency to ameliorate the condition, and to promote the happiness, of mankind. When our Lord commands us to be kindly affectionate one to another, to forgive our enemies, to do good to all, to check the first sallies of anger, to watch the first motions of desire, who does not see that he is labouring to lay the foundations of a quiet and settled conscience, to extirpate the bitter seeds of every malignant passion, to cherish and bring to per-

" 'if any man will not work, neither shall he eat;' and no one " thing is more severely condemned and exposed, than the " folly of the sluggard, who has the presumption to tempt " God, by imagining that all the blessing of Heaven will de- " scend on the head of Idleness, and that meat will drop in- " to his mouth, if he will but condescend to open it. How, " then, are these very different directions to be reconciled? " The truth is, that the Greek word, here rendered *take no* " *thought*, signifies properly, be not *anxious*, *solicitous*, *misera-* " *ble*, about to-morrow; literally and strictly, be not of *a doubt-* "*ful*, *divided mind*. So that, in this passage of scripture, our " Lord kindly commands us, not to make ourselves wretched, " by anxious carings and apprehensions about the future; " but in all cases of difficulty to perform diligently that part " which appears wisest and best for us to perform; then to " resign the matter into the hands of God; quietly and patiently " waiting the event, before it comes, and humbly acquiescing " in it, when it does come. In short, so to use our endeavours, " as if they were to effect every thing; so to trust in God, as " if they were to effect nothing." *Bishop Horne.*

fection the fruits of truth and holiness, to excite all the amiable feelings of the heart, and to fill the whole world with the choicest gifts of Heaven?—Well might he affirm of himself, that his yoke was easy, and his burden light!—Yes! blessed Lord! Thy service is perfect freedom. Thy commands are, indeed, not grievous. Thy ways are ways of pleasantness, and all thy paths are peace!

But, of all the lessons, which flowed from the lips of our gracious Master; there is not one, which more illustrates the truth of this proposition, than that which I have placed at the head of this day's paper. It is full of heavenly wisdom. It breathes the tender spirit of him, who wept at the grave of Lazarus, and mourned over the devoted wants of unhappy Jerusalem. It speaks the language of that divine love, which brought down from Heaven the compassionate Son of God.

Bishop Horne has a noble discourse on this subject, from which I have taken the following extract, for the present number. May it lead us to an humble and cheerful reliance on that good Being, whose mercy extendeth over all his works! On whom, indeed, should we rely, but on him, who openeth his hand and filleth all things living with plenteousness? He is the father of the fatherless, the husband and protector

of the widow. His guardian care numbers the very hairs of our head; and his providence suffers not even a sparrow to fall unheeded to the ground.

After a beautiful illustration of that part of our Lord's admonition, which sends us to learn contentment of the fowls of the air, the elegant author thus draws our attention to the lilies of the field.

"But, forcibly as these little animals teach, the parts of inanimate nature are by no means behind hand with them. Walk into a flower garden, and see with what beautiful garments God has invested the perishable grass, which to-day is, and to-morrow, withers away. Above the rest, look at the lovely lilly, pure and spotless as its parent, the light of Heaven. Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like it. It resembles a greater than Solomon; whose raiment was white as the light, so as no fuller on earth, no effort of human skill, and labour, could whiten it. From a flower of the field, then—from a flower of a moment's duration, man, who is made for Heaven and eternity, may learn how low the care of Providence vouchsafes to stoop.—And shall he not much more clothe you, O, ye of little faith?—Shall he not protect and adorn his chosen people, the plants of his own hand, the flowers of his own paradise? Yes, verily

believe in him, and he shall bring it to pass. The light of his countenance shall shine, the dew of his celestial benediction shall descend upon you, enabling you to grow up and flourish, to reflect glory on your Maker, and to cheer the hearts of men. And, although your appointed time on earth be short, and you, likewise, must fade away, and return to dust, yet even from that dust, can the same influences call you forth, to be clothed with honour and immortality, to enjoy a perpetual spring, and bloom forever, in unfading beauty.

" Our Lord closes his interesting and divine discourse, on this subject of worldly care and anxiety, with an argument drawn from the evident absurdity of anticipating sorrow, and rendering ourselves unhappy beforehand. ' Be not therefore careful for the morrow; for the morrow will be careful for the things of itself; sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.' The meaning is, that, having such a promise from our heavenly father, of being provided for as his children, we should not render ourselves miserable by forestalling mischief, and adding the future to the present; but that, having through his grace, transacted the business, and overcome the difficulties of the day, we should at night disburthen our minds of

solicitude, and rest our weary heads upon our pillows in peace; since the trouble of each day is sufficient for the day; and he, who has been with us to-day, will be with us to-morrow.

" In this memorable and most important precept, Christ consults our natural quiet, no less than our spiritual welfare. The chief sources of uneasiness are, vexation at what is past, or forebodings of what is to *come*. Whereas, what is *past*, ought to give us no disquiet, except that of repentance for our faults; and what is *to come*, ought much less to affect us, because, with regard to us and our concerns, it is not, and perhaps never will be. The *present* is what we are apt to neglect. That, well employed, will render the remembrance of the *past* pleasant, and the prospect of the *future* comfortable.

" Attention to the duties of the day, is like the manna, when it descended, fresh and grateful, from above; anxiety about the events of to-morrow, resembles the same manna, when distrustfully laid up, contrary to the divine command, it bred worms and putrified. Give us then, Blessed Lord! even as thou hast commanded us to ask at thy hands, our *daily* bread, and let it not be corrupted by discontented and unthankful imaginations! Thou art the same, yesterday, to-

day, and forever. Thou hast borne us from the womb, thou hast supported us from our youth up, even until now. Thou forsakest none, but those who have first forsaken thee. Only enable us to trust in thee, and then we shall never be confounded."

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NO. XXX.

HINTS FOR THE FORMATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE FEMALE CHARACTER.

On a former occasion, I called the attention of my readers to the dangers that beset the young man, when he first enters on the bustling scene of life; and I ventured to offer such advice, as appeared to me best fitted for that perilous situation. To-day, my mind turns to an object of equal importance, and unquestionably one of the most interesting in nature, that of an amiable female, ever prompt and flying to soothe the distresses of others, yet herself, too often the prey of corroding and incurable woes; formed by the hand of Heaven to bless and to humanize mankind, yet surrounded by peculiar cares and anxieties, and demanding all the kindness and protection that manly honour and the most generous friendship can bestow.

When a young and innocent female sets out on the journey of life, unacquainted with the dangers of the road, guileless herself, and unsuspicious of others, who is there that would not help the interesting traveller on her way?—What eye does not fire with indignation at the villain that would lead her into the mazes of error?—What hand is not stretched forth, to snatch her from the perils to which she is exposed? To those females who may honour these essays with a perusal, I, therefore, dedicate the present number. Much remains yet to be said, and some warnings to be given, which it is my intention to bring forward in a future paper: And happy indeed shall I esteem myself, if any effort of mine should tend to improve the rising generation; "*That while our sons shall grow up as the young plants, our daughters may be as the polished corners of the temple.*"

Though religion is indispensably necessary to *both sexes*, and in every possible character and station, yet a woman seems, more peculiarly, to need its enlivening supports, whilst her frame must be confessed to be admirably calculated for the exercise of all the tender and devout affections.

The timidity, arising from the natural weakness and delicacy of your frame; the numerous diseases,

to which you are liable; that exquisite sensibility, which in many of you, vibrates to the slightest touch of joy or sorrow; the tremulous anxiety you have for friends, children, a family, which nothing can relieve, but a sense of their being under the protection of God; the sedentariness of your life, naturally followed with low spirits, whilst we are seeking health and pleasure in the field; and the many lonely hours, which in almost every situation, are likely to be your lot, will expose you to a number of *peculiar* sorrows, which you cannot, like our sex, either drown in wine or divert by dissipation. Under these, or indeed any *other* distresses, religion is the only true and unfailing resource; and its hopes and prospects the only solid basis of consolation. In your many *solitary* moments what can afford the mind so sovereign a relief as the exercise of devotion to an all-present God? and, when domestic sorrows cluster upon you, which you cannot reveal to any friend on *earth*, what method have you left, but to pour them into the bosom of your Father in *Heaven*, who is confessedly the friend of the friendless, always willing to hear their cries, and always able to protect them? Let it, then, be your first study, by earnest prayer, and by all the appointed means of grace, to secure the protection of your Great Creator. Never fancy that religion will

render you gloomy or unpleasing. Deduced from scripture, and grounded upon reason, solid argument, and truth, it will become a source of perpetual cheerfulness to yourself, that will be reflected on every person and object about you.

Treat with the greatest reverence, every thing that relates to the house of God, to his ministers, to his sacraments, and to his word. To mention any thing that is sacred with levity, is a certain mark of a depraved heart, and a weak understanding.—A witty sneer or sarcasm on such subjects, is hardly to be forgiven. It is a species of sacrilege, and shocks all the sensible and better part of mankind.

To enkindle the flame of piety, to improve your understanding, and to mend your heart, read the scriptures. There is a richness and a comfort in this sacred book, which nothing else can equal. Every word is big with instruction; every sentence is divine. It is a mine perpetually opening; the deeper we dig, the richer is the ore. Do not read much at a time. Meditation is necessary to digest this food. You should reflect many hours for reading one. Every moment that you peruse this book, consider yourself as in the immediate presence of your Maker. Examine yourself by the promises and threatnings as you proceed, and do not forget

to bless God upon your knees, that he has given you such a lamp for your feet, and such a light to your path.

But books and rules of all kinds are but the theory of religion, and are only useful, as they lead us to practice. Let, then, your life be a continual comment on the good books you have read, and let the light of your example shine before men.

Christianity, you will easily perceive, has but two capital features; love to God, evidenced in acts of piety; and good will towards man, exemplified in all the possibilities of doing good. As devotion, however necessary, can bring no profit to our Maker, any more than a little taper can add to the splendours of the sun, the scriptures have laid the greatest stress on charity to our fellow creatures. This is the end of the commandment. It is the embodying of our piety; and the world could not subsist without it. Human life is full of wo. Charity is the angel, that binds up the sores of our fellow creatures, heals the broken in heart, clothes the naked, and feeds the hungry.—Our Saviour has said, that "it is more blessed to give than to receive;" and the pleasures which spring from charity, prove its origin to be divine.

True charity does not so much consist in multiplying little alms, to a number of poor people, as in making some grand and well directed efforts in favour of a few.—Educating one child of an overburthened family is a greater act of beneficence, than retailing to them occasionally a thousand petty benefactions. It is not a few scattered drops of rain, but it is a generous shower, coming all at once, which revives the parched earth, and quickens vegetation. It is amazing what charities even a small fortune will enable you to perform, if under the influence of christian œconomy. A few retrenchments from dress, vanity or pleasure, poured into the christian stock, will make it rich indeed.

A young lady has many methods of charity beside the mere act of giving money. That time, which sometimes hangs heavy on their hands, might be well employed in making garments for the naked, or providing cordials for the sick. If I wished a woman to be universally charming, I would recommend this expedient. Compassion is the highest excellence of your sex, and charity is the sacred root from which it springs. The soft bosom of a woman throbbing with sympathy, and her eye glistening with the crystal drops of pity, are the finest touches of Nature's pencil.

But the true sublime of compasssion is when it is extended to the soul. Every effort to arrest the guilty in their march to perdition, to convert a fellow mortal from the error of his ways, is perhaps, the nearest approach you can make, in this house of clay, to the ministry of angels, to the attributes of Jehovah, and to the unbounded compassion of him, who died for the sins of all. Cherish then, in your heart, this principle of heavenly charity, and fear not to meet with a thousand opportunities of calling it into action. Have you servants and dependants about you? Seize every favourable moment of instilling into their minds the holy precepts of religion. Teach them, as far as lies in your power, what they ought to do, and show them in your own example, how it is to be done. Have you no poor neighbours who stand in need, not only of your alms, but of instruction? Visit them in the double capacity of their mental and bodily benefactor. The earthly comforts you dispense to them will shortly vanish like all sublunary treasures; but the words of truth, and the principles of virtue, that you plant in their breasts, shall bloom and flourish through the ages of immortality.

But, above all things, forget not to do these, and all your labours of love, in the name, and to the glory of God. Think, act, and live, as in his presence. Be-

gin, continue, and end every day, as in his sight, and every action, as under his direction. Remember that all things on earth are but a shadow; that time is tumbling down the system of the universe, and that religion only can rise upon the ruins, by the labours it has inscribed to eternity and to GOD.

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NO. XXXI.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

In the last number of the Monitor, I promised to conclude, in a succeeding paper, some rules and observations, which I had arranged for the perusal of the young ladies of this community. I this day perform my promise; not over anxious to gain, but desirous to deserve, their approbation; and willing to hope, that the follies of a week have not drawn their attention altogether to other subjects.

Next to the performance of the great duties of religion, let me earnestly entreat you, my fair readers, to acquire the government of your temper. Many there are, who leave their humility in the closet, and their devotion at church; who are constant in the observance of all the solemn ordinances of Christianity,

but forget that golden rule of good will to all, without which all prayers, and forms, and ceremonies, are but as a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.—They would not neglect on Sunday, to hear the word of God; but they suffer their tempers, all the rest of the week, to run counter to the mild and peaceful spirit of the gospel: and sometimes it is to be feared, they return from the sacred altar of the Lord, to exercise a harsh dominion over their unfortunate dependants at home. But you, my friends, be not like them. Have you servants, whose comfort is in a great measure in your power? Remember that you, also, have a master in Heaven. To your superiors in age and experience, be respectful and attentive; be open and unaffected, cheerful, and obliging to your equals; be just and sincere, disinterested and courteous to all. Nothing can justify a single act of caprice, sullenness, or ill humour. If you would be happy yourself, strive to make all about you happy. It is the law of your nature, and the equity of Heaven: You cannot destroy the peace of others, without wounding your own.

Lay your imagination under the severest discipline. Young people, especially of your sex, are willing victims of the illusions of fancy. You enter upon life, as an enchanted country. The world, in

your eyes, has no caprice; fortune, no vicissitude; friendship is without insincerity; attachment, without bitterness; and marriage is all happiness, without alloy. But trust not these smiling delusions. Experience will not realize them. Look through them with the eye of reason, and see things as they are. The world at best, is but a checkered scene of good and evil. Such vain expectations will destroy your relish for rational pleasure, and leave you neither resolution to perform the duties of your station, nor fortitude to encounter the unavoidable calamities of life.

In the choice of books, consult the wisdom and experience of some tried friend, on whose judgment you can safely rely. This is a matter of great importance. The enemies of virtue are ever on the alert. In the tale of fancy, in the poet's song, in the light pages of a novel, in the columns of a newspaper, and, shame on the unworthy prostitution of talents! even in the sober and dignified records of history, you will find the subtle poison of irreligion. Every snare is spread, and every disguise assumed, to complete the ruin of innocence. Beware, then, how you read: and guard your little library from the intrusion of the dangerous and seductive volume, with as much care, as you would guard your heart from impure and wicked thoughts.

Without delicacy, no woman can be lovely. It is the sacred fence of female honour, and is never broken down without fatal consequences. Delicacy extends to every thing where woman is concerned. Conversation, books, pictures, attitude, gesture, should all be under its salutary restraints. If a girl ever loses it, farewell! a long farewell, to all her greatness!—" If this salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?"—How unfit are many parents to educate a daughter!—What injudicious pleasantries do they sometimes use, even in their presence!—A young girl should hear, she should see, nothing that can call forth a blush, or even stain the purity of her mind.

There is a vice with which your sex is generally reproached. The darts of slander, I grieve to say it, are thrown, too often, by the hand of a female. But I trust, your example will repel the charge, and prove, once more, that indiscriminate censure is never just.—Where you can praise justly, praise freely: where you find nothing to approve, be silent. The female voice is never less pleasing, than when raised to enumerate the faults of others; never more melodius, than when exerted to vindicate the honour, or palliate the failings, of an absent friend.

Although every stage of your life is full of dan-

ger, and exposed to difficulties peculiar to itself, there is one period of time most perilous indeed.—" If I " was called upon," says a charming author," to write " the history of a woman's trials and sorrows, I would " date it from the moment, when nature has pronoun- " ced her marriageable. If I had a girl of my own " at this critical age, I should be full of the keenest " apprehensions for her safety; and, like the great po- " et, when the tempter was bent on seducing our first " parents from their innocence and happiness, I would " invoke the assistance of some guardian angel, to " conduct her through the slippery and dangerous " path."*

Marriage is, doubtless, the most natural, innocent and useful state, if you can form it to any toler-

* The Rev. Mr. Bennet. His excellent letters to a young lady, which I have already had occasion to recommend, and of which it is impossible to speak in terms of too high approbation, furnished most of the reflections, which occur in this and the preceding number. I was anxious to impress on the minds of my fair readers some of the most important precepts, that have been delivered for the regulation of their conduct; and his invaluable production afforded all that I could desire. I have ventured to intersperse some thoughts of my own, and to connect some passages which were scattered through different parts of the work. But where I found the sentiments which I wished to convey, expressed in his own eloquent language, I adopted them without alteration, as that which has flowed from his masterly pen could not be easily improved.

able advantage.—It bids fairest for that little portion of happiness, which this life admits. and is in some degree, a duty, which you owe to the world. How defenceless is a single woman!—She cannot move beyond the precincts of her house, without apprehension. She cannot go with ease or safety into public. As she goes down the hill of life, her friends gradually drop away from her, like leaves in the autumn, and leave her a pining, solitary creature.

Yet, "they that enter into the state of marriage," says an old English writer, "cast a die of the greatest contingency, and yet of the greatest interest in the world, next to the last throw for eternity. Life or death, felicity or a lasting sorrow, are in the power of marriage. Yet a woman ventures most, for she has no sanctuary to retire to from a cruel husband. No! she must weep at home, and brood over her own sorrows. She may, indeed, complain to God; but in the causes of unkindness, she has no other appeal. Now therefore, summon to your aid, all that reading, observation, the advice of parents and friends, and long-lived experience, have power to bestow. Pause before you tie that gordian knot, which death alone can unloose; and before you decide on a measure of such incalculable importance, be sure that reason ap-

proves your conduct, and forget not to implore the direction of Heaven.

If a person come to a serious declaration in your favour, affect no prudish airs of reserve. If you really feel an affection for him, and can indulge it with prudence, do not scruple to acknowledge it, or to treat him, with the greatest openness and candour. This will engage forever the esteem of every liberal and honest man. If you cannot receive him as a lover, you will not fail to retain him as a friend. Suffer not your imagination to be dazzled with mere splendour. The glitter of wealth and equipage has induced many a poor girl to sacrifice her peace at the shrine of vanity: and her nightly pillow steeped in tears and bitter regret, has soon told her, that "better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith." Never suffer yourself to think, with partiality, of a person who is not guided by religious principles. A good man alone is capable of true attachment, fidelity, and affection. Others may feel a fugitive passion; but on this, alas, you can place no dependence. Nothing but religion is permanent, always consistent and always the same. Look for a person of a domestic cast. Of what consequence to you are the good qualities of your husband, if he be seldom at home? It has been often asserted, that a reform-

ed rake makes the best husband. It may be so; but I would not have you to risk your peace on so dangerous an experiment.—Although not absolutely necessary, yet it is highly desirable, that the man with whom you are to spend your days, should be a man of sentiment and taste. These qualities will variegate every hour with fresh pleasure, every scene with animated remarks, and every incident with the liveliest interest. Fortune surely should be considered as proportioned to your habits, education, and station in life. But if you find the other requisites, be as moderate as possible in this. A morsel thus sweetened will be pleasant to the taste. In a cottage so enlivened, joy will spring. The Almighty will look down from Heaven with approbation, and crown the happy pair with the choicest of his blessings!

And now, my young friends! I commit you to the care of him, who is the tender father of all his creatures. The world is before you, full of difficulty and danger. Pleasure will spread her thousand snares to deceive you; your passions will solicit unbounded gratification, and even your own heart will prompt you to deceive yourselves; but you are in the hands of the greatest and best of beings; and, whatever your lot may be, riches or poverty, health

or sickness, the state of marriage or a single life, you will be still beneath his watchful eye. Fear not. Be virtuous, be cheerful, be contented. See that your heart be right, strive to do your duty, and leave the rest to him.

THE WEEKLY MONITOR.

NO. XXXII.

THE STAR IN THE EAST, AND THE JOURNEY OF THE EASTERN SAGES.

"When, in the fulness of time, the son of God came down from Heaven to take our nature upon him, many circumstances concurred to celebrate the event, and to render it an illustrious epoch in the history of the world. It pleased the Divine wisdom, that the manifestation of the Deity should be distinguished by a suitable glory: and this was done by the ministry of angels, by the ministry of men, and by the ministry of Nature herself."

In this impressive manner, with equal simplicity and elegance, does the Rev. Dr. Buchanan open his admirable sermon entitled "*The Star in the East.*" He then proceeds to show the circumstances which attended these various manifestations of the power of God. "It was done, says he, by the ministry of "*angels;* for an angel announced to the shep- "herds 'the glad tidings of joy which should be "to all people; and a multitude of the heavenly "host sang glory to God in the highest, on earth "peace, good will towards men.'—It was done by "the ministry of men; for illustrious persons, divine- "ly directed, came from a far country, to offer gifts, "and to do honour to the new born king. And it "was done by the ministry of *Nature.* Nature her- "self was commanded to bear witness to the presence "of the God of Nature. A star, or divine light, "pointed out significantly from heaven, the spot upon "earth where the Saviour was born."

The whole of this excellent discourse deserves the attention of the serious Christian; and the glorious triumphs of the gospel in the east, where a light has shone "on them that sat in darkness and the shadow of death," suggest reflections of the most pleasing nature, and well suited to the design of these essays. But the subject to which I wish to

draw the attention of my readers, on the present occasion, is *the journey of the* eastern sages, *to do homage to the infant Jesus;* an event of so striking a character, and shedding such lustre on the evidences of our religion, that I think we may indulge a few minutes in reflection on it, with a reasonable hope of receiving both pleasure and improvement.

The persons who undertook this pious journey, are styled *Magoi*, or *Magi*, a term which the nations of the east applied to a sect of ancient philosophers, who were highly esteemed for their skill in astronomy, and other branches of natural philosophy, and were famous for the love and study of all the sciences. Of the country whence they came, there are various opinions; but the most probable is that which fixes on *Arabia Felix*. It is considerably less distant from Judea, than Persia or Chaldea (places mentioned by some expositors); it abounded with those productions of which the presents of the magi consisted; it was in the neighbourhood of the kingdom of Saba, or Sabæ; of which the prophetical psalmist had said, "The kings of Arabia and Saba shall bring gifts," and "unto him shall be given of the gold of Ara-"bia;" and it was that country, in the neighbourhood of which the prophet Balaam, near fifteen hundred years before, had delivered his famous predic-

tions; " I shall see him, but not now. I shall behold " him, but not nigh: there shall come a star out of " Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel."

Of the number of the persons who composed this ever memorable embassy, the scripture gives us no information.—Common opinion, judging from the different sorts of presents, which they brought, has limited it to three; but this seems to be mere conjecture, without any good foundation. Of their condition, or rank in life, we are also left in doubt; but it is certain, from the nature of their gifts, that they were persons of no mean stations; and if we bear in mind the words of the psalmist already quoted, we may reasonably infer, that they were royal worshippers:—wise princes indeed! who left the honours of an earthly court, to bow before him, who is king of kings and lord of lords.—It is well known that there prevailed, in the east, a general expectation of the Messiah for ages before, but especially about the time of his appearance. He was, in truth, what the prophet had foretold him to be, " the desire of all nations." On this point, the sacred history is confirmed by the testimony of heathen writers. The following quotation from Chalcidius, in allusion to the very star, of which we are speaking, is remarkable.—" There is a still " more venerable and sacred tradition, which relates,

" that by the rising of a certain uncommon star, was " foretold, not diseases or deaths, but the descent of " an adorable God, for the salvation of the human " race, and the melioration of human affairs; which " star, they say, was observed by the Chaldeans, who " came to present their offerings to the new born " God."—It appears from Pliny, that the shining forth of a comet, or a new star, was understood to denote the rising of a new kingdom, or the birth of a great prince. Well, therefore, might the magi exclaim, " Where is he that is born king of the Jews; " for we have seen his star in the East, and are " come to worship him."

" How just and how beautiful an emblem was " such a star of the blessed person to whom it pointed! " Celestial in its original; framed of the purest mate- " rials; admitting no dross and baseness into its com- " position; without spot or the shadow of a cloud; " shedding a lustre incapable of being sullied by the " objects on which it fell, and passing through all " things undefiled; moving above the world, though " moving in it; placed in Heaven, to give light upon " earth; rising in the east, but diffusing its glories to " the west; the first fruits of the day, the bright and " the morning star; dispelling the shades, clearing " the skies, eclipsing the other luminaries, reigning

" alone and unrivalled in the firmament; from thence " not more bright than beneficial, exerting an in- " fluence, powerful, though silent and secret; di- " recting and attracting men to the salvation it por- " tended."*

Wise philosophers! Illustrious magi! " They " saw, they understood, they set out. No distance " no difficulties, no dangers, were sufficient to deter " them. They passed the rocks and sands of the de- " serts, ' the tents of Kedar and the hills of the rob- " bers.' Children of the faith of Abraham, they left " their own country, obeying the heavenly call, " and, arrived at Jerusalem, they imparted the glad " tidings to those from whom they should have re- " ceived them. Neither afraid of Herod nor asha- " med of Messiah, they professed openly the occa- " sion of their journey. They believed, and there- " fore they spake. ' Where is he that is born king " of the Jews? To you, O ye rulers of Israel, we " apply ourselves. You must know the birth place " of your Redeemer. Saw ye him whom we seek? " Tell us where we may find and adore him.' "— Faithful and patient travellers! They did find him

* This beautiful passage, and the extracts which follow, are selected from bishop Horne's discourse on the Epiphany.

whom they sought, they found the young child with Mary his mother: they opened their treasures; they presented their gifts; they fell down and worshipped!

" When we reflect upon the difficulties and dan-
" gers that lay in the way of those eastern sages,
" and the unremitting perseverance which vanquish-
" ed them all, we shall blush at the remembrance of
" those trifling obstructions in our christian course,
" which we have so often been tempted to deem in-
" superable. Our faith, once fixed on the basis of
" its proper evidence, should never be shaken by the
" cavils of sceptical and licentious men. For when
" there is great strength of argument set before us; if
" we refuse to do what appears most fit to be done,
" till every little objection is removed that metaphysi-
" cal refinement can invent, we shall never take one
" wise resolution, as long as we live. Let faith,
" therefore, have its perfect work; let it go on, con-
" quering and to conquer, till we have thereby com-
" pletely overcome the world. Though Herod should
" be moved, and all Jerusalem with him, let us fol-
" low our heavenly conductor, and rejoicing with ex-
" ceeding great joy, proceed directly to Bethlehem.
" There, through meanness and obscurity, let us dis-
" cern the king of the Jews, give him the honour
" due unto his name, acknowledge and adore him, as

" our Lord, and our God. And since we are com-
" manded not to appear before the Lord empty, let us
" bring presents, when we come into his courts. Let
" us offer to him of our substance, and the first fruits
" of our increase; let us offer to him of the true rich-
" es, with which he has blessed us; faith, tried, preci-
" ous, resplendent, as *gold;* devotion, ascending from
" fervent affections, like the smoke of *frankincense*
" from the holy altar; love, peace, joy, and the other
" graces of sanctification, fragrant, cheering, and dif-
" fusive, like '*myrrh*, and aloes, with all the chief
" spices and powders of the merchant.' Let us offer
" to him our strength, our time and our talents, our
" souls and bodies, all we have, and all we are, to wor-
" ship and obey him this day, and every day which
" it shall please him to add to our lives. With
" these dispositions and resolutions, if we now come
" to his light, and haste to the brightness of his ri-
" sing, we shall hereafter behold him in his meridian
" exaltation, when heaven and earth shall be full of
" the majesty of his glory; when, the last enemy being
" destroyed, he shall appear, as the ' Prince of Peace,'
" in a city that hath foundations; when all kings
" shall fall down before him, all nations shall serve
" him; when he shall reign forever and ever, King
" of Kings, and Lord of Lords; when he shall receive

" as his just and rightful tribute (the only tribute
" which can then be paid) the praises of his redeem-
" ed subjects, and the everlasting hallelujahs of the
" celestial choir, ascribing, as we now do, to him,
" with the Father and the Holy Ghost, all blessing,
" and honour, and glory, and power, might, majesty,
" and dominion, forever and ever.

THE WEEKLY MONITOR.

NO. XXXIII.

ON THE TENDENCY OF RELIGION TO MITIGATE THE SORROWS, AND PROMOTE THE COMFORTS OF DOMESTIC LIFE.

It is a distinguishing excellence of christianity, that while its influence reaches to every great and extraordinary occasion, it adapts itself, with peculiar fitness, to all the common occurrences of life. There is no rank so elevated, that its threatnings cannot overawe and control; no lot so depressed, that its promises cannot animate and encourage. Felix, clothed in the robes of authority, trembles at its denunciations; and the poor fishermen of Gallilee support the pressure of want, and pain, and sorrow, in the hope of its bright rewards. But these are rare instances, to fix the foundations of our faith, and to humble the pride of

man. It is in the silent shade of retirement, in the still, small circle of domestic life, that our religion, daily and hourly produces the happiest effects, and proves itself to be divine.

And here, as in a thousand instances, we are constrained to admire and adore the goodness of God. Placed on this troubled scene of trial, vexed by the storms of anger, and tossed by the billows of fear and anxiety, *the gold is become dim, and the most fine gold changed, and our hearts are pierced through by many sorrows.* Yet we are not, thank Heaven! left destitute. *Persecuted*, by the enemies of our peace, *we are not forsaken; cast down*, by the power of sin, *we are not destroyed.* In the cup of bitterness some drops of honey are infused. A balm is applied to the deepest wound; and, to cheer and enliven our thorny path, the hand of our Creator scatters many a pleasant flower, and more fragrant than all, the unfading roses of domestic bliss.

Domestic happiness is, indeed, so indispensable to our welfare, and the subject comes with such force to the heart of man, that it requires no eloquence to set forth its beauty, no power of argument to establish its importance. The Almighty himself pronounced its eulogium, when he declared that, even in Paradise, "it was not good for man to be alone." Solomon

knew how to estimate it, when he averred, that "better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox, and hatred therewith:" and David tuned his sweetest lyre to its praise. "Behold," said the royal psalmist, "how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" "Many things," says an elegant commentator on this beautiful passage, "are good, which are not pleasant, and many plea-"sant, which are not good. But unity among breth-"ren is productive both of profit and pleasure; of "profit, because therein consisteth the welfare and se-"curity of every society; of pleasure, because mutu-"al love is the source of delight, and the happiness of "one becomes, in that case, the happiness of all."

Since then, domestic life is capable of being rendered the highest state of human felicity, and as the desire of happiness is natural to all, it is equally to be regretted and wondered at, that so many miss the object of their pursuit, and, like Esau, barter away this rich and lasting inheritance for the trifling and unsatisfactory gratifications of an hour. It would be impossible, in this place, to enumerate half the causes which render the marriage state unhappy, and blast the fair fruits of social and domestic comfort. They are as numerous, and as various, as the follies and vices of mankind; and to lay them before my readers,

would be to present the long catalogue of crimes that stain, and of infirmities that weigh down, our fallen nature.—But they may be all traced to the same bitter source, the disregard of religious obligation, and "the living without God in the world:" and, I believe it may be asserted, without the fear of contradiction, that he, who does not suffer religion to exert its influence on his heart and conduct, is unqualified to fulfil the duties, or enjoy the blessings of domestic life.

Let me, then, be permitted to call the attention of my readers to this important subject. This is not a matter of abstruse speculation, or of vain conjecture, to stimulate the lovers of disputation, or gratify an idle taste. Every description of persons will find their individual concern in it. It is the fondest wish, and most rational employment of every one, to study to be respected, beloved, and happy, at home.

Ye then, who have joined your hands and hearts at the altar, begin, by a firm conviction, that as your happiness depends on the blessing of Heaven, so, unless you conscientiously discharge your duty as christians, you cannot reasonably expect its attainment. Lift, then, your hands and hearts together, in mutual prayer.—Let every morn renew your joint supplications for grace and holiness, for health and peace; and

duly as night invites you to repose, commit yourself to him, whose guardian care neither slumbers nor sleeps. Seek, more earnestly than for all other blessings, to acquire the true spirit of religion; and, sooner or later, you will find your hearts purified by its power, and your conduct regulated by its unerring dictates.

Religion will teach you to moderate your desires, and check your vain expectations. Feeling that he is himself a weak and erring creature, the husband will not look for that perfection in his wife, which is denied to the lot of mortals. Humility will teach them both not to think more highly of themselves than they ought to think: and Charity will throw her veil over a thousand little failings, which, in spite of all our care, cling to the best actions we perform.

Religion will instruct you in the important business of regulating your temper.—Having an eye to the meekness of Christ, how can you give way to the unbridled fury of anger? His patience will teach you to let the storm blow over; and his compassionate allowance for the infirmity of his slumbering disciples, will soften down the ungracious accents of reproof. You will not cherish a scornful or haughty disposition, when you remember how he placed a little child in the midst of his ambitious hearers. You cannot re-

fuse to forgive an offence, when you call to mind his divine prayer on the cross.

Religion will inspire you with the love of order, and teach you to introduce it into all your domestic concerns, " God is not the God of confusion:" but has enjoined us, by his apostle, " to *do every thing decently and in order.*" This command, says a popular writer, " is founded in a regard to our advantage. It " calls upon us to lay down rules, and to walk by " them; to assign every thing its proper place, its al- " lowance of time, its degree of importance; to ob- " serve regularity in your meals, in your devotions, " in your expenses. From order spring frugality, " economy, charity. From order result beauty, har- " mony, concurrence. Without order, there can be " no government, no happiness: Peace flies from con- " fusion; discord entangles all our affairs, hides from " us the end, and keeps from us the clue; we lose " self-possession, and become miserable, because per- " plexed, hurried, oppressed, and easily provoked." And while you feel your hearts thus improving, and putting on daily some additional grace to adorn the christian character, it will rejoice you, my friends, to know, that you are confirming those habits of goodness, which will extend their influence far beyond the scenes where they first were formed. Domestic life

is the school of virtue. Abroad, we may act the parts of good men and christians; but we appear in our own, our natural characters, at home. All is not gold that glitters. A love of applause, respect for the opinions of others, decency, a sense of propriety, and motives far inferior to these, may teach the proud man, in public, to put on the garb of humility, the miser to unlock his treasure, and the revengeful to hold out the hand of dissembled forgiveness: But, it is in the bosom of his family, in his behaviour to his wife, his children, and domestics, that the mask falls off, and the man, in his true colours, stands before you. He, therefore, who sedulously strives to perform the duties, and cultivate the graces of christianity at home, is laying the foundation of a permanent character of goodness. The precious ointment that diffuses itself through all the members of his happy family, shall not leave him when he goes abroad into the world, but shed its fragrance on all his actions, in his intercourse with mankind.

But the greatest, the most glorious triumph of religion, remains yet untold.—You are now young and happy, and your hearts beat high with hope and exultation; but, *the fashion of this world passeth away;* and though now the sun of prosperity shines upon your dwelling, *remember the days of darkness, for*

they shall be many.—Then, my friends, when the pressure of affliction bears hard upon you;—when distress and disappointment meet you, in your connexions, your fame, and your fortune; when your earthly comforts make themselves wings and fly away; when all human confidence forsakes you; when your children die and leave you; and when the nuptial tie is about to be dissolved by the irresistible arm of death;—then is the time to feel the insufficiency of all mortal aid, and to crown the victory of christianity. Religion will then teach you, not to sorrow for the dead as those that have no hope; but to look forward to that blissful reunion of soul and body, when those who have cherished, on earth, the sweets of domestic love and union, shall flourish in the courts of Heaven, under the protection of that Being, *who maketh men to be of one mind in an house*, and is himself the author of peace, and the lover of concord.

THE WEEKLY MONITOR.

NO XXXIV.

ON THE NECESSITY OF REVELATION, AND THE SUPERIORITY OF REVEALED TO NATURAL RELIGION.

For the following essay, I am indebted to the kindness of a gentleman of this city, whom the *Monitor* is proud to rank among his best and most valued friends. I make no apology for laying it before my readers. The subject is most important, and the ingenious author, has handled it in a manner, which cannot fail to render it interesting to every lover of religion and true philosophy.

To vindicate the honour of his holy religion is the indispensable duty of every man who calls himself a christian. He ought to make his light so shine before men, that others seeing his good works, may glorify his father who is in Heaven. When he is fully convinced of the truth of those doctrines, on which he himself depends, with implicit confidence, for his present and future happiness, he is bound by every tie of humanity and religion, to exert all his energies in supporting and spreading the awful cause. Impressed with the importance of this inviolable obligation, I submit the following essay to your consideration, in the hope that it will not be found inconsitent with the plan of the Monitor.

Christianity has been attacked in a thousand different ways. To overthrow its foundations every power of the human intellect has been vigorously, but vainly employed. Built upon the rock of ages, it defies every assailant. Heaven and earth may pass away, but it shall remain unchangeable as the Being from whom it sprung.

Perhaps no assertions have been more triumphantly made, or more frequently repeated, by the enemies of christianity, than that the publication of

its doctrines and precepts is altogether unnecessary; and that natural religion affords light sufficient to conduct men, with wisdom and virtue, through every possible condition of this probationary state, to the abodes of perpetual felicity. It would, to an humble inquirer, be a satisfactory confutation of these assertions, to say that they are directly opposed to the executed plans of the Author of our being, and that he, by acting differently from them, has proved their falsity. But this will by no means satisfy our adversaries. They deny the truth of the facts on which this confutation depends. Trembling with fearful apprehensions of futurity, they wish to invalidate the authenticity of those sacred records, which, with unequivocal emphasis, declare that there is no peace for the wicked. They labour to find a ray of comfort in their misery, a shelter from despair, in the fallacious hope that they can prove, by the powers of human reason, that those things are untrue. Presumptuous men! Do you demand to be admitted in the councils of Omniscience, to know the moral and physical laws by which he rules the universe; and if the knowledge of these laws be withheld, will you deny their existence? The creature can never comprehend the Creator, a finite mind cannot conceive the inscrutable wonders of infinity.

Without considering the nature of original transgression, or the deep sense which every true christian feels of the indespensable necessity of mediatorial intercession, or the irrefutable proofs of the divine origin of our religion, it will not be uninteresting to examine this most important subject by some principles of right reason, which the believer and the sceptic equally allow to possess indisputable authority. Let us compare the doctrines and precepts of christianity with the doctrines and precepts of the teachers of philosophy. Let us weigh their respective influences and consequences, and candidly decide in favour of that system, which is best calculated to produce the present and future happiness of man.

In order to pursue this examination, with due impartiality, it will be necessary to revert to that period of time, when the religion of Christ was first delivered to the world. The religious opinions of every nation, except the Jews, constituted then an astonishing mixture of absurdity and blasphemy. Licentious amours, criminal transactions, and atrocious villainies, formed the principal part of the creed of Greece and Rome. What obligation could the precepts of morality, which were founded on such articles of faith, be supposed to possess? Nor were these opinions confined to the vulgar. Open the works of

their most refined philosophers, the invaluable remains of Plato or Cicero; and though you will find many elevated and noble ideas of the Divine Nature, yet they are so blended with gross error and inconsistency, that it may be fairly doubted, whether unassisted reason could ever have been able to separate the pure from the impure. Surely, not even the advocates of natural religion will think of contrasting these abominations with the sacred doctrines of christianity. They may loudly demand, if nothing will be allowed to the progressive improvement of the human mind. But they may be answered by observing, that how much soever physical philosophy has improved, moral philosophy has by no means made equal advances: that the different passions and motives which actuate the conduct of mankind, seem to have been as well known by Aristotle and Cicero, as by the profoundest philosophers of the present day; that religion has little or no concern with physical philosophy, but is wholly employed in regulating the moral faculties of man. Some of the modern high priests of infidelity have, indeed, raised a beautiful structure of what they are pleased to call natural religion, and they have discoursed with purified sublimity on the being and attributes of the living God. But, where have they collected the materials of which their fabrick is

constructed? They have laboured to erect it, by plundering the temple of christianity. From what source have they drawn their exalted sentiments? From the unpolluted fountain which flows from the foot of the cross. Where have they borrowed that light which now shines with so unsullied a lustre? From the fire which burns on the sacred altar of revelation.

The precepts of the gospel are distinguished by an infinite superiority.—All is consistent. Nothing redundant, nothing deficient. The heart is detected in all its windings. Vice, in its deepest recesses of thought, is seized with irresistible energy, and dragged before the tribunal which religion erects in the breast of every true believer. Pride, malice, and revenge, the perpetual foes of virtue, are crushed with relentless severity. There is no commutation between sin and holiness. Ye cannot serve both God and Mammon.

We will candidly acknowledge that moral philosophy had, even before the advent of our Saviour, delivered many excellent maxims for governing the passions, and exalting the dignity of human nature. But, even by its purest system, these grand objects were never attempted to be attained, without the injury of some virtue and the inculcation of some vice.

Pride or insensibility, or some kindred crime, always predominates, and it may be asserted, without fear of contradiction, that if it were possible completely to obey the dictates of the best ethics that were delivered to the ancient world, this obedience could not form a perfectly virtuous character.—Though it should, however, be for a moment admitted, that the study and practice of the precepts of philosophy, might be sufficient to guide the diligent and ardent lover of truth, in the paths of wisdom and virtue, yet it could not also be admitted that the publication of christianity was unnecessary. From the conditions of our present existence, by far the greater part of mankind must be employed in manual labours, and have neither time, opportunity, nor inclination, to acquire a high degree of mental improvement. Shall they then have no staff to support them through the journey of life? no rule to regulate their conduct? no lamp to enlighten their feet?—Can Philosophy cheer the uninformed poor man bending under a load of accumulated misfortunes, and struggling with distress? Can she teach him to lift his thoughts to his Father, who is in Heaven, to console himself with the reflection that whomsoever the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth, and to lay his hand upon his mouth, and say, not my will

but *thy* will be done? When guilty passions inflame his mind, and hurry him on to deeds of daring wickedness, can her voice arrest the uplifted arm, and calm the perturbed breast? When remorse tortures his soul, and every thought is agony, can she pour the balm of consolation into his bleeding wounds, lead him to the foot of the cross, and say to him, repent, believe, and live forever? When the shadows of the evening are lengthening around him, and the objects of sense fade from his corporeal eye, can she enable him, with pious acquiescence, to resign all his earthly enjoyments, to commit his wife and children to the care of his God, and their God; and to look forward, with holy confidence, to another and a better world? No!—these things are far beyond the power of all philosophy; and to perform these things, the Son of God left the bosom of his Heavenly Father, being the only agent who *could* perform and render our exertions acceptable, through the merits of his atonement. *He* is indeed the "true light of the world:" and "he who followeth him, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of eternal life."

The motives which christianity affords to induce an entire obedience to its laws, are undoubtedly the most powerful that ever were proposed. Life or death is set before us. Eternal happiness or endless

misery is declared to be the certain consequence of our present conduct. Obey, and live; disobey, and ye shall surely die; saith the Lord God Omnipotent. Let the infidel compare these motives of irresistible urgency, with the feeble incentives to virtue, which spring from all that philosophy has ever taught, and he will be compelled to acknowledge their incalculable superiority.

Never, then, let the religion of Modern Philosophy—the exclusive religion of a few, abstracted, speculative men—a religion which cannot be accommodated to *every* rank and situation of life, to *every* degree of mental capacity—be placed on a level with that Divine Religion, which binds up the broken hearted, and comforts those who mourn; which is the orphan's stay, and the stranger's shield; which is equally adapted to the wise and the ignorant, to the king and the peasant; and which diffuses its salutary efficacy through all the classes of society, encouraging, soothing, comforting, and exhilarating all who solicit its blessed influence.

THE WEEKLY MONITOR.

NO. XXXV.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

The following letter is the production of the gentleman who favoured me with the preceding essay, on the *superiority of Revealed to Natural religion.* Having investigated their respective claims to the attention of mankind, by arguments drawn from the comparative worth and utility of their peculiar precepts, he now meets the enemies of christianity on higher ground; and by proving the total insufficiency of human reason, and the want of authority in all human systems, has drawn a most satisfactory con-

clusion, in favour of the divine origin and unrivalled excellence of our religion.

TO THE MONITOR.

The favourable manner in which you received my former communication, has induced me to consider the same subject, in a different, but equally important point of view. Knowing and venerating the motives from which you entered on this undertaking, rejoicing in your success, and humbly desirous of promoting so laudable a design, I submit to you some additional reflections; satisfied that you will lay them before your readers, if you think them worthy of publication, among the numbers of the Monitor.

Man is a voluntary agent; he is induced by motives, but he possesses the power of election. His first and most ardent desire is the attainment of unalienable felicity.

Man is a created being; his intellectual faculties are limited. He, of himself, is unable to foreknow, with unerring certainty, the future result of any present system of conduct. Different plans have been proposed to him for obtaining the grand object of all his exertions; but every plan, contrived by hu-

man wisdom, and founded on human authority, must participate of the imperfections inseparable from human nature. Distracted by a variety of schemes, which claimed equal merit, asserted equal practicability, and promised equal success, unassisted reason could never make a decided choice; and man, wandering in the mazes of error, or involved in the gloomy intricacies of ambiguity, would be left to drag out a life of cruel anxiety. An insurmountable objection, therefore, to every system of natural religion, is the unavoidable want of sufficient authority. And when we consider that the truth of the facts, proving our religion, has been established on the basis of demonstration, the incomparable superiority of Divine Revelation bursts upon the mind with tenfold conviction. The moral precepts of every other system of ethics, except as far as they are corroborated by this, become insignificant or even criminal, inasmuch as they give an impulse to the mind, contrary to that which it receives from the single operation of the gospel. It may gratify the vanity of man to find that he has discovered many of the rules, by which his conduct ought to be governed; but it can add little force to their irresistible authority. The obligation to obey a law is proportionate to the dignity of the lawgiver. The eternal God of Heaven and

earth has, by his Son Jesus Christ, spoken to man, and delivered to him a law completely adapted to his nature, and calculated to conduct him to endless happiness. Perfect Goodness saw and pitied his miserable condition. Perfect Wisdom contrived the scheme of his redemption; and selected the only agent capable of executing the arduous task. Almighty Power has undertaken to remove every obstacle, to conquer the perversity of the human heart; and, finally, to accomplish the great design. Unerring Justice governs the whole, and will, with inflexible impartiality, recompense the sincere and humble disciples of the Heavenly messenger, and punish those who insult his doctrines, and violate his commands.

Vested with unlimited power, and possessing the attributes of Deity, veiled in a human form, the great Messiah came to teach men how to attain the object of all their hopes and all their toils. He delivered his precepts with the dignity of a God. He confirmed their obligation by an unspotted example, and by the exertions of creative energy. Never man spoke, as he spoke; never man acted as he acted. He, who enjoined his followers to take heed and beware of covetousness, had not where to lay his head. He, who taught them to forgive their enemies, and to pray for those who despitefully used them and per-

secuted them, went about continually doing good; he mildly rebuked the audacious soldier, who smote him; and, in the midst of his agonies on the cross, cried out, in behalf of his cruel executioners, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." He, who so often repeated, and so earnestly enforced, the spirit and the practice of humility, was born in a manger, girded himself with a towel, and washed his disciples' feet. He who declared himself to be the Son of the Most High, cured the sick, the lame, the deaf, and the blind, satisfied by a miracle the hunger of thousands, and made the raging sea and the stormy wind obedient to his voice. He who encouraged his mourning friends, by assuring them that he went to procure a place for them, that where he was, there they might be also, raised Lazarus from the dead, and on the third day after his own burial, burst the bonds of the grave, and rose triumphant over all his enemies. Sin had already fallen before him, Death is now bound to his chariot wheels. He receives the crown and the sceptre, and rules, with unlimited sway the world for which he bled.

There is now no need of hesitation, no need of farther examination; the mind may now with the most cheerful acquiescence, obey the precepts of the Beneficent Ruler of the world, and depend with im-

plicit confidence on his promises. The Lord has pledged himself, and he will perform: Faith shall not be disappointed: Obedience shall not lose its reward.

Animated by the certain knowledge of the truth of his religion, and guided by the example of his Great Master, the sincere christian goes on his way rejoicing. The storm may gather around him, but he, relying on the protection of Omnipotence, can view its scowling with undisturbed tranquillity. Enemies may surround him on every side, but the captain of his salvation will fight his battles, and render him victorious over every foe. His Saviour has trodden the path of life before him, smoothed the asperities of the journey, promised him assistance in the day of trial, hope in the hour of despondency, comfort in the midst of trouble and distress, and provided for his final reception, a habitation in the mansions of eternal felicity.

To the disciples of natural religion, the mysteries of futurity were wrapped in impenetrable obscurity. All was conjecture; all was doubt. Much was absurd; much was abominable. The best and noblest men of antiquity did, indeed, profess to believe that the soul was immortal; that the part of man which thought, reasoned, planned, and in-

vented, must be something greatly superior to any modification of matter, and could exist a distinct, intelligent entity, after the material system of the body had been destroyed. But this belief was vague and unsatisfactory, neither evinced by irrefutable arguments, nor taught by sufficient authority. With perhaps the single exception of Socrates, the natural proofs of the soul's immortality do not appear to have produced complete conviction in the mind of one of the ancient philosophers. The eye of reason could not penetrate the mist which overshadowed the grave. A dark veil concealed from view, every object which did not lie within the narrow bounds of this transitory life. Man stood trembling on the confines of time and of eternity, dissatisfied with the past, and ignorant whether his individuality should hereafter be blended with the general mass of matter, or forever preserve a conscious identity.

Revelation has dispelled the mist, drawn aside the veil, and disclosed the secrets of the unknown world. She has taught us to know the Lord God Omnipotent, long suffering and merciful, abundant in goodness and truth. She has assured us that man is an indestructible being, created in the express image of the Incomprehensible Deity. She has delivered to us the law which he commands us to obey

and instructed us in what manner we must act, to merit his approbation, and obtain the promised reward. She has pointed out the only object capable of occupying all the faculties of an immortal soul; and affording inexhaustible funds of progressive felicity.— She has encouraged us to believe that we shall through all eternity continually increase in glory, and make nearer approaches to the standard of infinite Perfection.

To Revelation, then we, owe our noblest wisdom, our highest virtue, our purest happiness, and our most exalted hopes.— During the ages of heathen darkness, moral philosophers, like stars shining in the silence of night, afforded a few glimmering rays, which assisted to guide the footsteps of the anxious, bewildered traveller: but, the Sun of Righteousness arose; and every twinkling luminary was lost in the blaze of gospel glory, overwhelmed in a flood of celestial light.

THE WEEKLY MONITOR.

NO. XXXVI.

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF A RIGHT EMPLOYMEMT OF TIME.

THERE is no truth, with the importance of which the sacred writers appear to have been more deeply impressed, than the brevity of life, and the inestimable value of time. "Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life," said the venerable Jacob to the Egyptian monarch; and he mourned that he had not attained to the age of his fathers. "My days, (said Job) are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope." And when, in the anguish of his soul, he ventured to expostulate with the ALMIGHTY, this mournful truth still pressed on his mind—"Cease, then, (he cried,) and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little; before I go whence I shall

not return?" When Moses struck the lyre to the praise of the God of Israel, this was the burden of his song—"Thou carriest away the children of men as with a flood. They are as asleep. All our days are passed away in thy wrath. We spend our years, as a tale that is told. Our strength is cut off, and we fly away." And when Isaiah called to the nations, as the voice from Heaven inspired—"All flesh is grass," he cried, "and all the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it. Surely the people is grass."

Yet, did not these sages of old, waste, in idle lamentation, that time, which was destined for nobler ends. Instead of vain regrets for the *past*, or anxious anticipations of the *future*, they arose from the sleep of forgetfulness; and strove, by active virtue, to arrest, if it were possible, the flight of the *present* hour. "Arise," they cried, with a warning voice, to their fellow men, "redeem the time." "*Now* is the accepted time; *now* is the day of salvation. Why stand ye here, all the day idle? Be sober; be vigilant. Watch and pray. The end of all things is at hand." Well did they know the arduous task they had to perform; and, oh, how were they straightened until it was accomplished! They counted the hours as they flew,

as the miser tells every mite, that lessens his hoarded treasure. They were travellers, sighing for the joys of home; and did not loiter away those moments, which were allotted to bring them to their journey's end. They saw their path before them. Life was hastening to its close. The day was far spent, and the night was at hand. They quickened their steps before the shadows of death gathered about them, and put an end to their exertions forever.

Let us, then, lay this subject to heart. Let us waste no longer this precious gift of Heaven. Let us search the sacred records, for the lessons of wisdom, that shall guide us in our search after truth. Let him, who is yet in the first stage of life's journey, enrich his memory with the stores of useful knowledge. The labours of the vernal season will crown and bless the remainder of the year. The manna that is gathered in the morning, will cherish and support him during the heat and burden of the day. Avoid inaction, as that which your nature most abhors.—"Activity (says a fine writer) is an essential attribute of the mind. Its faculties exist only when they are exercised. It gains a new accession of strength from every new exertion, and the greater acquisitions it makes, it is enabled to make still greater. It is not

a brook formed by the showers: it is a living fountain, forever flowing, and yet forever full."

Set apart stated periods for the important duties of life. Let every hour have its allotted task. Let not pleasure obtrude on the sober walks of business; nor even study and meditation steal too much from the sweet hours of repose. There is a time for all things. Order is the great law of nature. The tides ebb and flow with wonderful and invariable regularity. The seasons come forward and retire, in beautiful succession. The moon and stars are true to their appointed times; and the sun knoweth the hour of his going down.

Endeavour to distinguish every day of your life by some good action. If no occasion present itself of doing good to others, you may still do good to yourself. Have you no evil disposition to change, no unruly passion to conquer, no dangerous connexion to break?—Examine your own heart. You will find some virtues yet waiting to be called into life, and others ready to die away for want of a friendly hand to support and to cherish them. But, above all things, accustom yourself to frequent self-examination, and duly as evening returns, review the actions of the day that is gone. If conscience smile on the recollection, give thanks unto God, and retire to your bed in peace; but if the re-

mory of no good deed refresh you; and if you have wandered from the paths of virtue, and fallen an easy prey to the allurements of vice, sleep not, I entreat you, until you have washed your pillow with repentant tears; and confessed, in the bitterness of your heart, and with vows of future amendment, that you have lost, nay, more than lost, a day!

I know not how I can better conclude the present number, than in the words of an elegant writer, the reverend Mr. Logan, one of whose discourses led me to the choice of this subject. He has animated a most awful truth, with all the fire of genius; and decorated it with all the graces of composition. Every sentence confesses the hand of a master. Every thought is dressed by the finger of taste.

" Fellow mortals, the time is now passing that decides your fate forever! The hours are at this instant on the wing, upon which Eternity depends! In this view, let me exhort you to look back on your past life. Call your former hours to an account.— Ask them what report they have carried to Heaven. Is there any thing in your life to distinguish it from mere existence? Do you discern any thing but shadows in that mirror which remembrance holds up? Is the book of memory one vast blank, or blotted all over? What have you done since you came into being, to distinguish yourselves from the brutes

that perish? Have you enriched your mind with the treasures of wisdom? Have you adorned your life with the beauties of holiness? Have you laid up many deeds of piety and charity, as a good foundation against the time to come? Unless you have done these things, you have done nothing. You have been blanks in the universe. You are as if you had never been. You have been fast asleep; nor has your sleep been the less sound, that you have dreamed you were awake.

"I now call upon you to 'arise, or be forever fallen.' It is now high time to awake. Up then and be doing, and the Lord shall be with you. Glory, and honour, and immortality are set before you; and Almighty God calls upon you to finish the work which he has given you to do.

"To you, my younger friends, this duty recommends itself under the most interesting claims. You are now in that period, when time can be improved to the best advantage. Figure to yourselves the loss which the year would sustain, if the spring were taken away; such a loss you sustain. No tears nor lamentations, nor bitter upbraidings, will ever recall that golden period. The star sets to rise no more; the flood rolls away, never to return.

"Your own experience, my aged brethren, will urge the instant necessity of redeeming the time.—Consider the fate that awaits you soon. A few steps will bring you to the threshold of that house which is appointed for all living. 'Man that is born of a woman is of few days. He cometh forth as a flower, and continueth not.' By the unalterable law of nature all things here hasten to an end. An irresistible rapidity hurries every thing to the abyss of eternity; to that awful abyss to which all things go, and from which nothing returns. The great drama of life is perpetually going on. Age succeeds age, and generation generation. The race of men, saith a Jewish writer, is like the leaves of the trees. They come forth in the spring, and clothe the woods with robes of green. In autumn they wither; they fall; the winter wind scatters them on the earth. Another race comes in the season, and clothes the forest again.

"To sum up all, my friends, the time is short. We are as guests in a strange land, who tarry but one night. We wander up and down in a place of graves. We read the epitaphs upon the tombs of the deceased. We shed a few tears over the ashes of the dead; and in a little time we need from our surviving friends the tears we paid to the memory of our friends departed. Time is precious. The time

is now passing, that fixes our fate forever. The hours are at this instant on the wing, which carry along with them your eternal happiness, or eternal misery. Time is irrecoverable. The clock is wound up; the hand is advancing; and, in a little time, it will strike your last hour."

THE WEEKLY MONITOR.

NO. XXXVII.

ON THE DUTIES OF PARENTS, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

THERE is not in the whole compass of human observation, a subject of greater importance to the happiness of mankind, than the moral and religious education of children. "Train up a child," said Solomon, "in the way that he should go; and when he is old he will not depart from it." Never did a wiser precept flow from the mouth of the royal preacher; and the experience of near three thousand years has confirmed his decision. Yet, such is the fatal weakness of our nature, that we seem to fail most, in that which most concerns us. While every passing ob-

ect, of little or no moment, seizes and engrosses our attention, we leave to the direction of others, to the blindness of passion, to accident, and to the influence of a thousand external circumstances, that most important task, which God and nature have imposed upon us, and which it is equally our pleasure, our interest, and our duty to perform. I confess, I am at a loss to account for the sad neglect of parents, in the discharge of their duty to their children. Their love of their offspring cannot be doubted. This is a passion so closely interwoven in our constitution, by the great Author of our being, that he who would devest himself of it, must do violence to his nature, and eradicate the strongest feeling of the heart. Either, therefore, we must conclude, that the error of parents, in this respect, arises from mistaken notions of the true principles of education, or from their not being sufficiently aware of its incalculable importance. In either case, the consequences are fatal. An erroneous system of instruction leads, inevitably, to ignorance, to folly, and to vice; and the parent who undervalues the importance of his duty, will be apt to perform it with indifference, or to neglect it altogether. He only who knows the right path, and feels what an awful concern is at stake, will be careful to answer to God and his conscience; and will labour, with earnest and

unremitting solicitude, to act the part of a faithful guardian to his child.

I know that it is impossible, within the limits of this paper, to draw even a faint sketch of all the arduous duties of a parent; yet on such a subject, I would not be altogether silent. My heart prompts me to the task, and in giving vent to its emotions, I equally consult my own delight, and the improvement of my readers.*

Ye, then, whom Providence has appointed the natural friends and guardians of your helpless charge; begin, at an early period, to fulfil the duties of your important and dignified station. Let it be your first care to form the minds, and mend the hearts of your children. Watch with sedulous attention the first opening of their young ideas, and catch, while fresh from the hand of nature, the features of their various dispositions. Now is the time to direct their leading passion into its proper channel; and fix their affections on worthy objects: to warm the cold; to rouse the in-

* If the reader be desirous to see this subject illustrated in an ample and impressive manner, I beg leave to refer him to a series of discourses on education, translated from the German of Zollikoffer, and recently published in Boston. This excellent, and highly interesting work, the perusal of which suggested the design of this essay, abounds with much original and important matter, and is entitled to a place in the library of every conscientious parent.

active; to overawe the froward and presumptuous; and to animate and encourage the gentle and timid. Mark now, the first workings of the heart, and check the first emotions of evil desire. The sin that most easily besets them, will soon, too soon, alas! betray itself. It is your part, and this is the moment to crush the viper, ere it infix its deadly sting, to smother the spark, ere it break forth a destructive flame.

Accustom your children to form correct notions and imbibe just ideas. Show them things as they are. Let their earliest lessons be learned from the ample volume of nature. Lead them forth from their books into the open air. The rising sun in his splendour, the song of birds, the fresh verdure of the earth, and all the surrounding beauties of creation, will not be lost on their active and inquiring minds. And now, check not their innocent, nay laudable curiosity but encourage and reward it, by information suited to their tender years. But, beware how you resolve their doubts, and satisfy their thirst for knowledge. A false or inadequate explanation of any subject, is, at all times, pernicious, but most especially, when addressed to a child. Error soon becomes habitual. Early impressions it is difficult to efface; and the mistaken notions, and superstitions of the nursery, not unfrequently mislead and harass us through life.

Seize every favourable occasion of training your children to habits of virtue.—Inure them to obedience, to reverence of their superiors, to humility and self-denial. Encourage, by all the means in your power, their charitable and benevolent affections. Tell them, that it is their duty to be kind and gentle to all, especially to their dependants; that all persons are entitled to civility, especially they whose services they are daily receiving. Are they impatient for some enjoyment? accustom them to bear disappointment with good humour. Has some one of their companions offended them? show them how good, how graceful it is to forgive an injury; how mean, how hateful, to gratify revenge. Thus, every hour will bring with it fresh opportunities of improvement. Their amusements will be converted into lessons of instruction; and the most common incidents of childhood will afford occasions of checking some bad passion, or calling into action some noble and virtuous principle.

But, above all things, ye parents, who seek the welfare of your children, labour to impress on their susceptible minds, the true principles of religion. Show them how helpless, how dependent they are, how unable to remove the slightest pain; and then lead their thoughts to that invisible guardian, who watches over and protects them. Are they full of health and spirits,

surrounded by friends, and blest with the comforts and conveniences of life? while their young breasts expand with joy, oh! tell them of that great benefactor to whom they owe all these blessings, and who only requires, in return, the homage of a grateful heart. And, when you perceive the beauties of nature catching their attention, and exciting their involuntary admiration and surprise, seize the happy moment, to elevate their thoughts to the glorious Creator of all these wonders. Impressions, thus made, will sink deep into the heart, and outlive many a cold and formal lesson, delivered without earnestness, and no sooner heard than forgotten.

And now, as reason advances, instruct them in the doctrines and precepts of our holy religion. Convince them by facts and their own experience, that they are erring, sinful creatures, warped from their original rectitude; and then point to the compassionate Redeemer, who lived and who died, to restore them to happiness and honour. Habituate them to contemplate the sacred records of his life and death, and more than all things, to strive to imitate his divine example. Here, ye parents, is an ample field for the exercise of all your talents. And oh! let it never be forgotten; that example succeeds when the best precepts fail; that if you wish your children to

be virtuous, you must be virtuous yourselves; if you expect them to adorn the doctrines of Christ, you must yourselves display the spirit, and support the characters of christians. Teach, then, your children the sacred importance of religion, by the reverence you pay yourselves to the altar and ordinances of God. Show them how awful and indispensable is the duty of prayer, by the regular, solemn and affecting manner, in which you invariably perform it. Convince them, by the peace which you enjoy on the performance of a good action, that virtue and happiness are inseparable, and by your own abhorrence of falsehood, implant in their hearts an habitual love and admiration of truth. Thus will you, indeed, train them up in the way they should go; and your pious labours will be twice blest; blest in securing for yourselves, the reward of good and faithful servants, and in preparing for the future happiness of your beloved children.

Such are the arduous duties, which Heaven has imposed on the parent. And are there wanting sufficient motives to strengthen and animate his performance?—" Say ye, who best can tell," ye mothers, would not your bosoms swell with indignation, at the charge of being wanting in affection to your children? Ask the father, if the boy who now looks up to him

for support, is not more precious to him than fame or fortune, and dear as life itself? Is it not, ye parents, your fondest wish, that the tender pledges of your mutual love, should act the part of honour through life, and secure the esteem of the virtuous portion of mankind? Do you hope that they will survive to be the glory of your old age, the staff of your declining years, and not bring down your gray hairs with sorrow to the grave? Oh! watch, then, the hours of their infancy; shield them from the attacks of vice and infidelity; act not the part of the mistaken disciples of our Lord; 'but suffer them to come unto Christ, and forbid them not.' And on all these holy endeavours forget not to implore the blessing of Heaven.—Thus will you ensure to yourselves a joyful recompense. The task itself will be delightful. You will be the true lovers of your country, the conservators of its liberties and its virtue, and the benefactors of generations yet unborn. If, after all your toils, some wayward child wander into the paths of error, and forget in manhood, the virtuous principles of his youth, nature may mourn, but it will be your consolation to reflect, that you have done your duty.—But, should Heaven crown your labours with success, what a joy will it be to find, at the last day, that, in the

number of the blest, not one of your little ones is missing; and that the same happy family, who served God together on earth, shall then live together, in inconceivable and endless felicity, in Heaven!

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NO. XXXVIII.

ON THE WICKEDNESS OF APPLYING RIDICULE TO RELIGIOUS SUBJECTS, AND THE MEANS OF OPPOSING THE ATTACKS OF THE SCORNER.

It is melancholy to reflect, how many difficulties the Christian has to encounter; how many dangers deter him from entering on the narrow path of rectitude, and continue to harass and impede him, to the end of his journey. But, such was the lot of the great Captain of his salvation, and the christian soldier must not complain. His religion is too pure, not to excite the enmity of a corrupted world; too spiritual for the slaves of sensual indulgence; too noble and disinterested for the selfish and mercenary; too meek and humble for the aspiring votaries of ambition. Every evil propensity takes the alarm; every bad passion

of our fallen nature rises in arms against it; and there is no mode of attack, that human ingenuity could devise, which has not been tried to check its progress. The spirit of persecution has been let loose upon it, and memory still weeps over the records of past times. The sophisms of a false and specious philosophy, have laboured to perplex its plain and simple precepts. But these being foiled by the mighty force of truth, its enemies have called in another ally, and now endeavour to complete, by ridicule, what neither power nor sophistry could accomplish. It is not enough, that the scourge, and the spear, and the cross, are prepared: christianity, like its great Author, must submit to the mockery of the soldiers, to the purple robe, and the crown of thorns. This the prophetic apostle foresaw. "*There shall come*," said he, "*in the last days, scoffers;*" and our own experience may convince us, that he was guided by the spirit of truth.

The scoffer is, perhaps, the most powerful auxiliary, that ever was employed to injure the cause of christianity. Persecution raised that noble army of martyrs, whose blood has sealed the authority of the religion, for which they died: and the subtle objections of the infidel have roused the sleeping friends of revelation, whose immortal labours have fixed its evi-

dences on the solid basis of truth and demonstration. But the scoffer acts a more insidious part. Skilled in the frame and workings of the human heart, he makes his approaches where we least suspect him, and attacks that passion of our social nature, which reposes on the esteem and honour of our fellow beings. Arguments we could oppose and defeat; and, therefore, he does not use them—but "who can refute a sneer?"

It is impossible to conceive a character more irrational and pernicious, than that of the scorner; and charity inclines us to hope that he acts in most cases, without a due consideration of the impropriety and wickedness of his conduct. Can that be a fit object of ridicule, which involves the peace of millions, and holds in one hand the promises of Omnipotence, and his awful threatenings, in the other?

"Nothing but stupidity, (says a late writer*) or the most frivolous dissipation of thought, can make even the inconsiderate forget the supreme importance of every thing which relates to the expectation of a future existence. Whilst the infidel mocks at the superstitions of the vulgar, insults over their credulous fears, their childish errors, or fantastic rites, it does not occur to him to observe, that the most preposterous device, by which the weakest devotee ever believed he was securing the happiness of a future life,

* Payley's Philosophy, vol. 2, chap. 9.

is more rational than unconcern about it. Upon this subject nothing is so absurd as indifference—no folly so contemptible, as thoughtlessness and levity. And let it be remembered, that seriousness is not constraint of thought; nor levity, freedom. Every mind which wishes the advancement of truth and knowledge, in the most important of all human researches, must abhor this licentiousness, as violating no less the laws of reasoning, than the rights of decency. Had JESUS CHRIST delivered no other declaration than that:—'The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the grave shall hear his voice, and shall come forth;—they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation;'—he had pronounced a message of inestimable importance, and well worthy of that splendid apparatus of prophecy and miracles, with which his mission was introduced, and attested—a message, in which the wisest of mankind would rejoice to find an answer to their doubts, and rest to their inquiries. It is idle to say, that a future state had been discovered already—It had been discovered, as the Copernican system was—it was one *guess* among many. He alone discovers, who *proves;* and no man can prove this point, but the teacher, who testifies, by miracles, that his doctrine comes from GOD."

But, after all, the scoffer, it is to be feared, will continue to shoot his arrow at the sacred altars of religion, and the infirmity of our nature will still instinctively shrink from ridicule: It becomes, therefore, a matter of the most serious concern, to put those on their guard, who lie most in the way of this dangerous temptation:—And, when you look around you, and see a young man of good principles yet unsettled by habit, and unconfirmed by experience; his heart glowing with the sentiments of honour, and his cheek kindling at the slightest suspicion of reproach; convinced that all is not right within him, yet afraid of "the world's dread laugh;"—*almost*, but not *altogether*, a christian;—does not every generous feeling of your nature prompt you to warn him of the perils to which he is exposed?—To such an one would I call, in the language of affection and solicitude; and urge him, by all that is noble, and dear, and sacred, to reject the counsel of the ungodly, and sit not in the seat of the scornful. "Oh, fly," would I say, "from their society, who would rob you of your comfort here, and your hope of peace hereafter. Of what are you ashamed?—Do you blush to honour that Great Being, who first called you into existence, and still sustains, protects, and blesses you?—Is gratitude, then, so despicable a feeling, that you are ashamed to express it

to your good and gracious Benefactor?—Does it degrade you to bend at that altar, where the best and wisest of mankind have rejoiced to worship?—And are you ashamed to bear the name of that Saviour, who suffered a life of humiliation, and a death of dishonour, for you? Do you not perceive, when the scoffer mocks at religion, that he endangers the peace, and shakes the foundations of society?—and would it not be glorious, to show your family, your friends, and your country, that you dread more their merited reproach, than all the unmeaning laughter, and contemptible ridicule of fools?

Go on, then, young christians, strong in the goodness of your cause, and ashamed of nothing but vice. Examine the evidences of your religion, and be ready, at all times, to give the reason of the hope that is within you. Having discovered that truth is on your side, have boldness in the faith—be steadfast, immoveable—and tell the scorner, in the words of the apostle, "that you are not ashamed of the gospel of CHRIST." Yet, cast not away the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. "He who hates another, (said a celebrated convert to Christianity) for not being a christian, proves by doing so, that he is not a christian himself." But, above all things, let the whole tenor of your actions correspond with the goodness of your principles, and the

strength and solidity of your faith. Undeviating integrity, and an unspotted holiness of life, will sooner silence the ridicule of the scorner, than all the arguments you can bring forward. The infidel, who affects to despise you, will secretly honour you in his heart. The gay and inconsiderate may be won, by your example, to think more highly and reverently of that religion, which thus preserves you, firm and unbending, in the midst of a crooked generation. All the wise and the virtuous, will esteem and love you. Good angels will guard and strengthen you; and He, of whom you have not been ashamed on earth, before men, will crown and reward you, in the presence of an assembled universe, and in the glory of his Father, in Heaven.

THE WEEKLY MONITOR.

NO. XXXIX.

ADDRESS TO THE AGED.

It is with real pleasure that I lay before my readers the following letter, received from a correspondent, whose ingenious labours have more than once enriched the pages of the Monitor. The subject which he has chosen on this occasion is of incalculable importance; and while it will be read with peculiar interest by the aged, to whom it is more immediately addressed, it cannot fail, I think, to convey instruction to readers of every description.

It is natural for us all to look forward to an advanced period of life; and that hope, which never leaves us, fills every breast with the expectation of reaching a good old age. Let the young, then, study beforehand the parts which they one day hope to perform. Now in the morning of life, let them labour that its evening may be spent in peace; and, while the spring puts forth her blossoms, and the summer unfolds his ripened treasures, let them lay up in store, those solid comforts, which will cheer and enliven the winter of their declining years.

FOR THE MONITOR.

The variety and originality of your labours increase. You have given lessons of virtue and holiness on many of the separate traits of goodness, which ought to be found united, in the character of the christian. You have counselled the young man, entering upon the active and deceiving scenes of life, and the virgin, advancing to the years of maturity, and tremblingly alive to all the most delicate emotions of the heart. You have advised parents in the education of their children, and pointed out the true path of conjugal felicity. Permit me now to address the aged readers of the Monitor, and to lay before

them a few observations, which perhaps may merit their serious attention; and, impressed by the efficiency of divine grace, influence the conduct of their remaining years. The author of spirits, in employing apparently natural means, delights to prove, by the weakness of the agent, the irresistible efficacy of his own power. They labour in vain, who labour without his blessing. And with his blessing, the humblest endeavours may be crowned with consummate success. "PAUL may plant and APOLLOS may water, but GOD alone can give the increase."

Age is calculated to make a reverential impression on every feeling and generous heart. We survey the decay of even inanimate objects with emotions, which can be more easily conceived than described. The withered trunk of a stately tree, the ruins of the noble monuments of human ingenuity and power, speak a language which cannot be misunderstood. The voice of nature speaks with the energy of the prophet, when he uttered the inspirations of the living God; "Lift up your eyes to Heaven, and look upon the earth beneath; for the Heaven shall vanish like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that live therein shall die." If these be the impressions made by the decay of senseless matter, surely the decline of man is calculated to ex-

cite equally awful reflections, and we are naturally led to bow with reverence, before the venerable aspect of old age. But let it be remembered that the hoary head is a crown of glory, *only* when it is found in the way of righteousness. Though age is exempted from the toilsome labours of youth, it still has indispensable duties to perform. While we are permitted to remain in this state of probation, we are called upon to think, to speak, to suffer, or to act, according to the part which our great Creator has allotted to us in the different stages of life. Youth is the season of daring enterprise and useful activity; age of instructive wisdom and dignified virtue. It must neither be degraded by childish levity, nor debased by the contaminating influence of odious vice. The old man will claim in vain the honour due to his age, if his principles be corrupted, or his example pernicious. The follies and vanities of the young may be extenuated, though not pardoned, by their want of experience. They are ignorant of the futility of frivolous amusements, and of the regret which they ultimately cause to the reflecting mind. But what can excuse him, who on the brink of the grave, spends the time which he ought to employ in preparing for eternity, in decorating his person, or regulating the economy of a ball? Let it not be thought that I

would, for a moment, wish to abridge the innocent pleasures of the aged. No. I earnestly wish to adapt them to their period of life, to increase their purity, and to render them permanent, by establishing them on a foundation which can never fail.

Let the aged endeavour to acquire an uniform cheerfulness of disposition, equally remote from melancholy and intemperate mirth. Melancholy spreads a gloom on all around. It darkens every countenance and disturbs the serenity of every mind, that comes within the reach of its baleful influence. It is a venom that preys upon the soul, and poisons the spring of every joy. Intemperate mirth is almost always the ebullition of conceited ignorance, and thoughtless levity. It has never been found joined to wisdom or virtue. The wisest of men has said, as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of fools.—Let me entreat you, therefore, my aged friends, to avoid these two extremes! Banish them from your character. Suffer them not to encroach upon your peace.

To instruct the ignorant, to curb the impetuous, and encourage the timid, are the privileged, the noble employments of the aged. But let no repulsive severity injure the influence of your wisdom. Cultivate a graceful suavity of manners, which may, at once,

conciliate esteem and command respect. You have been accused of declaiming against the increasing depravity of men, of making degrading comparisons between the associates of your early years, and the youthful companions of your old age, and of exclaiming with bitter acrimony against those harmless enjoyments, in which you can no longer participate. I am persuaded, that these accusations have been carried far beyond the bounds of truth. They afford ample scope for the imagination of the poet, and the eloquence of the orator: they appeal to the interested feelings of a great majority of mankind; and they have for those reasons been so frequently repeated, and so often received, with approbation and applause. But, as no universally prevalent opinion is without some foundation, let it be your endeavour individually to refute these assertions. Instruct the young in the paths of holiness, without discouraging their exertions, by assuring them that the world is continually becoming worse. Stimulate their ambition in the pursuit of learning, wisdom, and virtuous glory, by holding up to their example the illustrious models of antiquity, or the exalted men whom you yourselves have known; but damp not their ardour, by telling them that such men as they were shall never again enlighten and dignify the human race. Point out to

them, in the most impressive manner, the dangerous and unavoidable consequences of unlawful pleasures; but tell them not that every pleasure is unlawful; and do not diminish or destroy their happiness, by restraining them from any innocent gratification. Let all your instructions be dictated by a spirit of parental affection, and unfeigned solicitude for their present and future prosperity. Let them evidently flow from a purified and generous heart, and they will seldom fail of producing their due effect.

But, of all the duties incumbent on the aged, none is so important, or so indispensable, as the careful preparation for another world. The wheel of life is rapidly revolving, and we are all hastening, with irresistible velocity, towards that bourn "from which no traveller returns." Charmed by the novelties of life, and confiding in the vigour of health, the young may be induced to defer the day of self-examination. They perhaps think that they may yet wander with impunity in the way of vanity; and that the time of serious meditation may be safely postponed. Even to them, these thoughts are often fatally fallacious. They are cut frequently off in the midst of their career. The breath of death often blasts the beauty of the opening rose. The wind of the desert levels the towering cedar with the dust, and the young man is carried to an

early tomb. But you can be deceived by no such hopes. Speedily must the day arrive, which shall call you to give an account of your stewardship.—And how can you stand before the tribunal of an omniscient, impartial Deity, if you shall have neglected the trust which he committed to your charge? Do any of you still willingly violate his commands, and expect hereafter to repent and to be forgiven? Deluded, miserable mortals! You are acting in direct opposition to the interest of your immortal spirits. Death cometh like a thief in the night, and in a moment, when in your own conceit you are most secure, you may be hurried away.

Do any of you still slumber away your time, as if there were no final retribution, no state of future existence, no eternal, immutable God? In the name of the Saviour of the world, I call upon you to awaken from your lethargy, and consider your perilous condition. The horizon is dark and gloomy around you. The thunder of Heaven rolls over your head. Yet a little while, and the day of probation and repentance is gone forever. The grave closes on all your hopes and an awful Eternity rises to your view. Gracious, benevolent Father of the universe! can there be men so lost to all sense of gratitude, so lost to all sense of their own danger, as still to hesitate what part they

ought to choose! Do they still reject the offered mercy, and thrust back the hand which presents to them pardon, acceptance, and endless felicity! O, my God! turn thou their hearts, turn them ere it be too late, that they may yet seek and find thy salvation.

Ye venerable and exalted ornaments of the human race, whose light has continued shining more and more unto the perfect day, who have walked with your God from your youth up, and found your supreme delight in regulating your minds by his commands, and in performing the work which he had given you to do, allow a fellow traveller in the journey of life, to congratulate you on the glorious prospects, which are now opening before you, and cheering your passage to perpetual bliss! You now feel the sacred joys of vital religion; you can say with the prophet.—"Though the fig tree should not blossom, and no fruit be in the vine; though the labour of the olive should fail, the fields yield no meat, the flock be cut off from the fold, and no herd be in the stalls, yet we would rejoice in the Lord, yet we would joy in the God of our salvation." You have realized in your own happy experience, the noble and elevated sentiments of a most eloquent preacher,* who thus de-

* Logan.

scribes the blessings, which result from a life, spent in the performance of every moral and religious duty. "While the animal spirits fail, and the joys which de- "pend upon the liveliness of the passions decline "with years, the solid comforts of a holy life, the de- "lights of virtue and a good conscience, will be a "new source of happiness in old age, and have a "charm for the end of life. As the stream flows plea- "santest when it approaches the ocean: as the flow- "ers send up their sweetest odours at the close of the "day; as the sun appears with the greatest beauty in "his going down; so at the end of his career, the vir- "tues and graces of a good man's life come before "him with the most blessed remembrance, and im- "part a joy which he never felt before. Over all the "moments of life, religion scatters her favours, but "reserves her best, her choicest, her divinest bles- "sings, for the last hour."

THE WEEKLY MONITOR.

NO. XL.

ON THE INFLUENCE OF RETIREMENT ON THE MORAL AND RELIGIOUS CHARACTER.

Of all the various means, which have been recommended for the cultivation of the understanding, and the improvement of the heart, I know not of one more deserving of our adoption, than the habit of occasional retirement from the world. It has received the sanction of long tried experience; and the wise and the good of all ages, have borne witness to its salutary effects. In the school of retirement have been reared those stupendous monuments of genius and

wisdom, which continue to draw forth the admiration of mankind: There, the poet " builds the lofty rhyme," the orator invokes the spirit of eloquence, and the devout soul trims her holy fires, and rises in contemplation to things above.

But this habit of retirement, so salutary in every respect, is with regard to religion, a sacred duty. The saints of old have stamped it with their authority. Isaac, the patriarch, " went out to meditate at even tide."—" Commune," says the royal psalmist, " with your own heart, upon your bed, and be still." Isaiah, with his usual energy, calls to us, in the name of the Most High, " Come, my people, enter thou in- " to thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee"— and our Lord himself, who came down from Heaven, to teach us the things that belong to our peace, has added to these admonitions the force of his own example. " When he had sent the multitude away, he went up into a mountain, apart, to pray."—Often, indeed, did the mountain bear witness to the fervency of his devotion; and, in the hour of his agony, he chose the solitude of the garden, and the dead silence of the night, to prepare himself for the dreadful scenes, in which he was about to engage.

To him, who is really desirous to improve in all the graces of the christian character, the advantages re-

sulting from the seasonable performance of this duty, are incalculable. It fills him with more just and awful conceptions of the Supreme Being, than *he* can possibly imbibe, who holds an uninterrupted commerce with the world. Surrounded by the attractive pleasures of life, the objects of sense fasten upon our imaginations, and, too often entirely engross our hearts. But now, that the doors are shut about us and the world is excluded, ideas of Deity rush upon the mind. The soul, " as a bird escaped from the snare of the fowler," mounts up to Heaven, converses with kindred spirits, and feels that she is destined for *another and a better world.*

The hour of retirement is also that of self-examination. Here are no partial friends to flatter us, no pleasures to seduce us, no ever-changing vanities to distract our attention. Now is the time, to commune with our own heart and be still; to call ourselves to account, to review our past life, to see that our present conduct is under the direction of reason and religion, and to strengthen and renew our virtuous resolutions for the future. This is the moment, to curb our head-strong passions, and listen to the still, small voice of conscience. Are you wounded by the darts of calumny, and does nature prompt you to revenge?— Fly from the object of your anger, and enter into your

closet:—The scene being changed, other and better feelings will succeed, and you shall experience the delight of forgiving an enemy, and overcoming evil with good.—Are you a prey to the stings of Envy; do you repine at your own lot, and sigh for the honours and enjoyments of another? Retire from the world that disturbs you, and call to mind the words of the psalmist—" Fret not thyself, because of the ungodly: " leave off from wrath and let go displeasure; put " thou thy trust in the Lord, and be doing good: he " shall make thy righteousness as clear as the light, " and thy just dealings as the noon-day." Let him, therefore, who would use this world as not abusing it, fix occasional seasons for serious considerations on the world to come. Let him who is engaged from morn to night in the endless avocation of business, dedicate some portion of his time to the acquirement of the *pearl of great price*, and the possession of *the one thing needful:* Let the voluptuary try, for once, how superior to all sensual enjoyments, are the calm and dignified pleasures of reflection; and let the thoughtless, the dissipated, and the gay, check for awhile their restless wanderings, and sit down to the feast which nature and reason provide for them at home.

Let it, however, be remembered, that unless we prepare our minds, and set a watch upon our thoughts,

in vain shall we expect to reap the advantages of retirement. When we enter our closet, we must shut out the world; otherwise, to use the words of an old writer;* " it is like coming to God's flaming bush, " with our shoes on our feet. Thou seest the bird, " whose feathers are limed, unable to take her former " flight; so are we, when our thoughts are clogged to- " gether by the world, unable to soar up to our Heaven " in meditation. The pair of brothers must leave their " nets, if they will follow Christ; Elisha his oxen, if " he will attend a prophet. It must be a free and a " light mind that can ascend this mount of contem- " plation, overcoming this height, this steepness. Cares " are an heavy load and uneasy; these must be laid " down at the bottom of the hill, if we ever look to attain " the top."—" Thou art loaded with household cares; " perhaps public. I bid thee not cast them away: " Even these have their season, which thou canst not " omit without impiety. I bid thee lay them down " at thy closet door, when thou attemptest " this work. Let them in with thee, thou shalt find " them troublesome companions, ever distracting thee " from thy best errand. Thou wouldst think of " Heaven; thy barn comes in thy way, or perhaps thy " count-book, or thy coffers; or it may be, thy mind

* Bihsop Hall.

" is before hand, travelling upon thy morrow's jour-
" ney: So, while thou thinkest of many things, thou
" thinkest of nothing; whilst thou wouldst go many
" ways, thou standest still. And, as in a crowd, while
" many press forward at once, through one door,
" none proceedeth: So, when variety of thoughts tu-
" multuously throng in upon the mind, each proveth
" a bar to the other, and all an hindrance to him that
" entertains them."

And now, let me entreat my readers to bring this subject home to their own bosoms, and to reduce to practice the lessons of wisdom and experience. You live, my friends, in a world of depravity, and you know that evil communications corrupt good manners; escape, then, while yet you have strength, before the contagion fasten upon you, and, for a season at least, breathe a purer air. Christian! the tempest is gathering around thee: rest, then, awhile thy shattered bark, in the calm haven of retirement—the storm will so soon blow over, and thou shalt pursue the voyage of life in safety. Soldier of Christ! when the battle rages, and thy spiritual enemies wax stronger and stronger, withdraw awhile, from the field, and recruit thy wearied spirits—So shalt thou " *go forth conquering and to conquer.*" " *The Lord himself shall*

" *be thy strength, and shall deliver thee from the peril*
" *of the sword.*"

It was full conviction of these important truths, that raised in the mind of the great *poet of the Seasons*, the following just and solemn reflections, which I have selected as a suitable conclusion of the present number:—

" Now, while the drowsy world lies lost in sleep,
Let me associate with the serious night,
And contemplation, her sedate compeer:
Let me shake off th' obtrusive cares of day,
And lay the meddling senses all aside.
Where now, ye lying vanities of life!
Ye ever-tempting, ever-cheating train!
Where are you now? and what is your amount?
Vexation, disappointment, and remorse.
Sad, sickening thought! and yet deluded Man,
A scene of crude disjointed visions past,
And broken slumbers, rises still resolved,
With new-flushed hopes, to run the giddy round.

" Father of light and life, thou Good supreme!
O teach me what is good! teach me thyself!
Save me from folly, vanity, and vice;
From every low pursuit! and feed my soul
With knowledge, conscious peace and virtue pure;
Sacred, substantial, never-fading bliss!"

THE WEEKLY MONITOR.

NO. XLI.

ON THE INSTABILITY OF HUMAN AFFAIRS. THE MONITOR'S FAREWELL ADDRESS TO HIS READERS.

It has been often remarked, and I fear with great reason, that mankind in general live under the influence of two grand delusions. They conduct themselves, for the most part, in this life, as if it were never to have an end; and regard the next, as if it were never to have a beginning. Yet, surely, "of man's miraculous mistakes, this bears the palm." For it seems to be impossible for a reflecting person to look around him, without being continually reminded of his own mortality, and the short-lived du-

* This last number of the Monitor was written at the close of the year 1809.

ration of all terrestrial things. The trees of the forest rise up in majestic grandeur, only to wither, and scatter their leafy honours around them. The flower that opens to the light of the morning, is chilled by the blast of evening. The river rolls onward until it is lost in the ocean. The child grows up to florid youth, exults awhile in the vigour of manhood, and soon sinks into the decrepitude and imbecility of old age. Nations and kingdoms flourish and decay, in perpetual succession. "Babylon is become a possession for the bittern, and pools of water; and her towers and palaces are laid low, and swept with the besom of destruction." Every thing within us and about us, is mutable. Our friends forsake us or die; our hopes sicken, our opinions change. We feel, that we have no abiding city here; we see that the fashion of this world passeth away. The seasons, with restless activity, are continually altering the face of nature. Day succeeds to day, and year to year; and on every object of creation, the characters of brevity and instability are engraved by the finger of God.

Reflections of this nature are, at all times, salutary, and can hardly fail to convey an important lesson of wisdom to every serious mind: But they come with greater force, at those stated periods, which mark distinctly the unceasing progress of time. On these

points of our existence, we naturally rest awhile, like travellers at some stage of their journey, at leisure to recall the scenes we have already witnessed; to survey the place to which we have arrived; and to gain some information of the countries through which we have yet to pass. Such pauses as these are eminently calculated to banish that levity, which is the bane of true wisdom; and I, therefore, seize the occasion, which this day presents itself, of pressing them on the minds and hearts of my readers.

The present year has nearly performed its destined course; it is about to be " numbered with the years beyond the flood;" its glimmering light trembles in the socket, and will soon be extinguished forever. Such, my friends, is our fate. The termination of our time is, also, near at hand; and, at no distant period, we too, like the year which we contemplate, must resign our stations, and give place to a new generation. Let us, then, dedicate its last hours to a serious retrospect of the past, to a careful examination of our present state, and to unfeigned vows of amendment for the future. Thus shall the new year look back with pleasure on the old; and the new generation honour our memories when our bodies sleep in the grave.

And who is there, that can, without strong and various emotions, review the events of but one year?

Has the messenger of death entered your dwelling; has your loved partner been torn from your arms; some valued friend taken from your bosom; some dear child severed from your fond embrace? I do not wish you abruptly to check your tears. Jesus wept at the grave of the friend whom he loved. Time, with lenient hand, will close your wounds, and religion will consecrate your moderated sorrow. But listen to the admonitions of the great teacher Death. You have leaned on the world, and the broken reed has pierced you to the heart. You have chased a shadow, and your hands have grasped the air. Turn, then, your thoughts to those mansions, where friends shall never die, where children will never leave you, and where those, whom God has joined, shall never more be put asunder.

But some of you have passed the year in health, and peace, and comfort: your friends and families smiling around you; your characters and fortunes, rising in the world; and your prospects brightening on every side. And does not this enviable, unmerited exemption from the common lot, teach you a lesson of gratitude to that Being, who has thus anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows? Ah, thoughtless, unthankful man! Well might Isaiah say, "The ox knoweth his

owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know; my people do not consider."

But, independently of all temporal concerns, who is there, that can lay his hand on his heart, and say, that during the present year, he has committed no actions which his conscience cannot reprove, and omitted no duty, which reason and religion required him to perform? Who has so bridled his tongue, as to let no expression of anger exasperate his enemy, or too severe a reproach agonize an offending friend? And, more than all, who has kept his thoughts so holy, as not to offend that Being, who cannot look, without displeasure, on impurity? Alas! my friends, here the best of us must plead guilty. Here are motives of contrition, of humility, and of amendment, for us all.

But, while we thus bring our thoughts to a serious review of the past, and examination of the present state of our hearts, how naturally and anxiously do they press forward to the unknown scenes of futurity! Imagination takes wing, and hope paints the days to come in all the gay colours of delight. But let us not trust to this smiling delusion. Here, let us, once more, recur to experience; and as age delivers his counsels to youth, let the old year teach a lesson of prudence and moderation to the new.

Life, my friends, let hope flatter as she may, will still be a checkered scene of good and evil. In vain, you anticipate that unmixed portion of happiness, which Heaven has denied to the lot of man. You cannot have the rose without its thorn. Winter will continue to deform the beauties of the year, and flowers will not spring up, spontaneously, to decorate your path. Be sober then, and modest, in your expectations. Such as past times have been, such in general, as to the distribution of joys and sorrows, of hopes and disappointments, will the future be: And all that you have to wish and strive for is this, that affliction may be endured, in future, with more patience, and prosperity enjoyed with more thankfulness, and greater moderation.

And tell me, my readers, of the scenes in which the present year has seen you engaged, of the actions which it has enabled you to perform, what scene does memory most delight to recall, what actions confer most honour upon your nature, and leave the best impression on your minds? Are they not those, in which you consulted the dictates of conscience, the purity of your own hearts, and the welfare of your fellow men? And, as only your past deeds of virtue now make you happy, be assured that virtue alone will constitute your happiness to the end of life.

Secure then, while it is in your power, a retrospect so delightful; and let your conduct be so regulated, throughout the approaching year, that when it, also, shall have come to its last hour, its memory may leave nothing behind.

With such reflections as these, let us bid adieu to all the hopes and fears, the cares and anxieties, the restless activity, and busy enterprize of the year, that is now hastening to its close: And who, without a melancholy emotion, can even bid adieu to the parting year? The idea of *the last*, has been often said to be a mournful idea. We cannot part for the last time, even from inanimate objects, without sensations of regret. The last sight of the spot where we passed our childhood, the last glimmering of the land, receding from the gliding vessel, and the parting words of those who are about to bid us a final adieu, fill our bosoms with feelings which may be easily conceived, but which no language can ever describe. Against the existence of such feelings the cold and phlegmatic argue in vain. Nature is true to herself; and I confess her power, while, with a beating heart, I inform my readers, that the Monitor, on this occasion, addresses them *for the last time*.

Of the motives which prompted me to commence these papers, little requires to be said. They

have been already stated, as the occasion suited, and as circumstances seemed to draw them forth. In times, like the present, when infidelity assumes a bold and imposing attitude; when religion is falsely described to be a system of ignorance and superstition; when a pernicious philosophy insidiously labours to ruin the peace of millions, and skepticism affects to call in question the plainest and most undeniable truths; at such a momentous period, when every friend to the cause of Christianity, seemed to be called upon to arm in its defence, I thought it to be my duty to step forward and raise my feeble voice, in support of the best hopes and consolations of man. The weakness of the advocate will be more than compensated by the goodness of the cause. Like the widow in the gospel, I have thrown my contribution into the public stock. It is but a mite; but it is all I had in my power to bestow.

Although I feel, at this moment, the full force of the considerations which first induced me to address the public, I am compelled by reasons, which it would be obtrusive to lay before them, to relinquish, at an earlier period than I originally intended, the further prosecution of my design. But, independently of my inability to do that justice to my undertaking, which is at all times due to subjects addres-

sed to the public, and most especially on the awful concerns of religion, it will be sufficient, I trust, to mention, that avocations of a nature inimical to literary pursuits, force me, thus prematurely and unwillingly, to lay down my pen. And I regret this the more, because my readers and I were just beginning to be acquainted. The cold ceremonies of introduction had been performed, and we had just arrived at that more advanced state of friendship, when I could address them with familiarity, and venture to reprove them without the fear of giving offence. But so it is in life. We meet like travellers at an inn, but scarcely has the spirit of social intercourse begun to operate, when the time of departure arrives, the happy group is broken up, and the new formed friends abruptly separate, as business or pleasure directs them.

Whatever influence these papers may have had on the hearts of my readers, sure I am that they have not been unproductive of good to my own; and the pleasure and improvement I have received in composing and selecting them, have amply repaid the time and labour they have cost me. But I am willing to believe that they have done some good to others; and the manner in which they have been received by an indulgent public has been far more favourable than I

had any reason to expect, and demands my most grateful acknowledgment. But it is time to force myself from this fascinating subject; to relinquish the pleasing task of admonition, in the hope that some one better qualified, may resume it; and to study in the retirement which I love, to reduce to practice those precepts which I have endeavoured to enforce on the attention of others.

And now, my readers, I commit both you and myself, to the care of the common Father of us all; confiding implicitly in his protection, and happy in the delightful hope, that some of you may have been awakened to a sense of the infinite importance of religion, drawn from the snares of vice, and allured into the paths of virtue, by the humble labours of

THE MONITOR.

THE END.